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How School and School Board Leaders Can Increase the Sense of Social Belonging for Students with Developmental Disabilities Who Exhibit Challenging Behaviour

Kathleen Sutherland
Western University, ksuther8@uwo.ca

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ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan seeks to understand how school and school board leaders at Ontario Catholic District School Board (OCDSB) can increase the sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs are the frameworks used that assist in identifying potential factors that may be impeding the organization from achieving change. A PESTE analysis as presented by Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols (2016) is conducted that outlines the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors that impact this Problem of Practice. These factors and their potential impact on the role educational leaders play in developing a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour are discussed. The role of unions for both teachers and support personnel are discussed, especially in relation to Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings in which union representatives bring forward employee concerns regarding workplace violence, employee safety, job participation, and concerns regarding increased staff absenteeism.

Transformational leadership is discussed as it relates to changing perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Implementing change throughout the various levels within the organization will be discussed through the lens of distributed leadership. Considering the gap analysis, tools used to frame change include Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model, Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, and Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012). Suggestions for the future state of the organization are identified and align with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). Limitations of the proposal are discussed.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Keywords: Developmental Disabilities, challenging behaviour, Bolman and Deal, Four Frames model, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, transformational leadership, distributed leadership, PESTE analysis, joint health and safety committee, employee safety, Professional Development Continuums

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Executive Summary

This Organizational Improvement Plan was developed to better understand how school and school board leaders can help develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. School and school board leaders at Ontario Catholic District School Board are struggling with challenging and aggressive behaviour of students with Developmental Disabilities. Unions are reporting that employees are feeling concerned for their safety, but are also expressing feelings of disempowerment as they are not being consulted during safety and/or behaviour plan development for the students with whom they work.

Use of Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model is discussed in relation to how it may assist school and school board leaders in understanding potential factors inhibiting organizational change. Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs framework supports Bolman and Deal's (2013) model and encourages educational leaders to consider possible factors affecting staff and student behaviour. A PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) helps educational leaders to understand political, economic, sociological, technological, and environmental factors that may be affecting the Problem of Practice.

Changing perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour is addressed through the lens of both transformational and distributed leadership. Transformational leadership is used to explore how Ontario Catholic District School Board can change employee perceptions, using Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs as a tool to develop board-specific forms and/or checklists. This will support transformational leaders as they seek to change employee perceptions, encouraging staff to consider that challenging behaviour may indicate an unmet need for which additional support is required and is not simply a wilful act of aggression of a student against staff.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Distributed leadership supports this Organizational Improvement Plan as the key players involved in student support will be encouraged to provide input, not only in terms of student needs, but importantly in terms of staff needs. This will be referenced in the change readiness tool, Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames Model. Staff will be encouraged to identify any additional supports they feel are required, as well as actively participate in the change plan, providing guidance, for example, in the development of a long-range professional development plan. The equity audit tool, a series of Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012) will further support a distributed leadership approach in assisting school and school board leaders, as well as school staff, address issues of equity and accessibility. Limitations of the proposal are discussed.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Dedication

This Organizational Improvement Plan is dedicated to my family. To my husband for his support, encouragement, and understanding for all my time researching and writing, and for his time helping me as my go-to IT support person – I love you and could never have survived these past three years without you. To my children (two at the outset of this program and one mid-way!) for their understanding that it was homework time once again. I love you all and hope that completion of my dream shows you that your dreams are always within reach. This never would have been achievable without your support. And to my Dad, looking down from above – I did it, I really did!

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Thank you to all the professors who have helped me along the way in shaping my PoP into the work it is today. Thank you to the staff in the Graduate Studies Department, especially Elan, for taking time to meet virtually and through telephone, and always responding to emails. A special thank you to Cheryl Bauman-Buffone for your support and encouragement throughout the program and completion of this OIP.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Contents

Abstract	i
Executive Summary	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Contents	vii
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
List of Appendices	xii
Glossary of Terms	xiii
Chapter One: Introduction and Problem	1
Introduction	1
Organizational Context	1
Leadership Problem of Practice	6
Role and Responsibility	6
Evolution of the Problem of Practice	6
Perspectives on the Problem of Practice	8
Inclusion for All	8
Ontario Ministry of Education Documents	9
Student Aggression at School	12
Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice	12
PESTE Analysis	13
Political factors	13
Economic factors	14
Sociological factors	15
Technological factors	15
Environmental factors	16
The Four Frames Model	17
Structural frame	17
Human resources frame	19
Political frame	21
Symbolic frame	21
Leadership – Focused for Vision for Change	22

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Transformational and Distributed Leadership.....	23
Organizational Change Readiness	27
Communicating the Need for Change.....	29
Conclusion	33
Chapter Two: Planning and Development.....	35
Introduction	35
Framework for Leading the Change Process	36
Incremental Change.....	36
Leadership Styles	38
Theoretical Frameworks.....	39
Critical Organizational Analysis.....	40
The Four Frames Model.....	41
Structural frame	42
Human resources frame.	45
Political frame and coalitions.	48
Political frame and assumptions.	50
Symbolic frame.....	51
Maslow’s Framework.....	53
Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice	55
Option One	55
Option Two	56
Option Three	59
Leadership Approaches to Change	60
Conclusion	67
Chapter Three: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication	69
Introduction	69
Change Implementation Plan	70
The Importance of Relationships	77
Committee Development.....	80
Long-Range Planning.....	83
Implementation Challenges.....	84
Timeline Development.....	85
Limitations	85
Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation.....	87

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Change Readiness Tool	88
Problem of Practice Tool.....	92
Equity Audit Tool.....	95
Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change	96
Change Process Communications Plan.....	104
Next Steps and Future Considerations	108
Conclusion	110
Summary and Conclusions	112
References	115
Appendices.....	128
Appendix A	128

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

List of Tables

Table 1 Summary of PPM No. 119: Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools.....	10
Table 2 Multi-Year Strategic Plan based on Organizational Improvement Plan Goals (Adapted from current MYSP at OCDSB).....	71
Table 3 Organizational Change Plan: Implementing Change for Students with Developmental Disabilities Who Exhibit Challenging Behaviour.....	100

List of Figures

Figure 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.....	53
Figure 2 Change plan process.....	102

List of Appendices

Appendix A.....	122
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ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Glossary of Terms

Challenging Behaviour is aggressive behaviour that results from anxiety, fear, or panic (Adapted from Marks & Marks, 2016, p. 118).

Developmental Disability is defined as three interrelated factors including sub-average intellectual functioning and problems in adaptive behaviour, both of which occurred during the developmental period. These students usually fall within 1st or 2nd percentiles in standardized testing (Adapted from Bennett, Dworet, & Weber, 2013, pgs. 160-162).

Elementary School refers to the publicly funded education system in Ontario in which students who turn 4 before December 31 of the current school year can be registered to attend full-day kindergarten classes. Students in Ontario are not required to be enrolled in a full-time education program until they turn 6 years of age after the first school day in September of that year (Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education, *Education Amendment Act, 2006, p. 3*). At Ontario Catholic District School Board, full day instruction is provided for Junior Kindergarten/Senior Kindergarten and grades 1 through 8, typically ages 4 through 13.

Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) – An initial meeting that determines whether or not to identify a student as exceptional and the area(s) of exceptionality according to definitions provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Attended by at least three people, including the family, a principal, and supervisory officer or designate of the school board, the meeting determines student classroom placement. Parents/Guardians and students over 16 are invited to the initial meeting and annual reviews. The family may invite support personnel to any of these meetings. IPRCs are updated annually at the school level to review identification, placement, and student strengths and needs (Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, pgs. 2-5).

Inclusion/Inclusive Education – “Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected” (Equity and Inclusive Education, 2014, p. 87).

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Individual Education Plan (IEP) – An IEP is a written plan developed at the school level that describes the special education program and/or services required for a student. Included in the IEP are the area(s) of exceptionality, assessment information, student strengths and needs, accommodations and/or modifications to programming, specific expectations, services to be provided (e.g. instructional support), and methods for reviewing progress. Students who have an IEP may have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee, but it is not necessary. Principals are responsible for ensuring an IEP is developed within 30 school days of the student’s placement in a special education program and/or receipt of special education services. The IEP is developed in consultation with parents/guardians and/or the student, if they are over 16 years of age. Transition plans are required for all students with Autism. Integrated Transition Plans are required for students over the age of 14 who are in care of the Children’s Aid Society or who have been diagnosed with a Developmental or Mild Intellectual Disability. (Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 4-7).

Integration is defined to include the process of incorporating students with special education needs into classrooms and/or activities with their same-aged peers. This may or may not include additional staff support such as Educational Assistants.

MYSP – A Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) is developed at each publicly-funded school board in Ontario for a minimum of three years in duration. It is designed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies that align with goals outlined in Section 169.1 of the Education Act (Ministry of Education, 2017). Ontario Catholic District School Board has developed a 5-year plan and it includes our Mission Statement and 5 areas of direction including Catholicity, Supportive Environments and Well-Being, Relationships, Student Achievement, and Governance. Each directive is expanded to include goals, methods of achieving success, and assessment of progress. These directives align with priorities identified by the Ontario Ministry of Education, for example, equity and inclusive education (Adapted from Ontario Catholic District School Board, 2015, p. 1-9).

OIP – The final project for the Doctor of Education (EdD) in Educational Leadership at the University of Western Ontario. “The EdD OIP is a 3-chapter scholarly improvement plan that links relevant research and theory to practice, particularly authentic problems of practice that are

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

identified in the practitioner's local contexts. The OIP provides evidence-based pathways to address organizational problems, and more broadly, serve the public and/or social good" (Western University, 2017).

OCDSB – Ontario Catholic District School Board is a pseudonym used to prevent identification of the school board referenced within this Organizational Improvement Plan.

PoP – The Problem of Practice is “a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue embedded in the work of a professional practitioner, the addressing of which has the potential to result in improved understanding, experience, and outcomes” (Western University, 2017).

PPM No. 119 – Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119: Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools, is a document from the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) that provides direction to publicly-funded school boards in Ontario on the “review, development, implementation, and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies to support student achievement and well-being” (p. 2).

Secondary School refers to the publicly-funded education system in Ontario for students from grades 9 through 12. Students are required to attend school until the age of 18, but may choose to continue attending until age 21. This can include workplace and/or apprenticeship training programs (Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education, *Education Amendment Act, 2006, p. 1-4*).

Special Needs is recognized as students who have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and/or who receive special education programs and/or services (Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education, *2016-2017 Education Funding*, 2016, p. 2)

Chapter One: Introduction and Problem

Introduction

Organizational Context. Please note that pseudonyms are used throughout this paper for school board name and school board references as well as all personal communications and meeting references. Ontario Catholic District School Board (OCDSB) encompasses a large geographic area of more than 35,000 square kilometres and provides an education to more than 4,500 students from kindergarten to age 21. OCDSB's mission of providing an education rooted in Catholic teachings assists students in deepening their Catholic faith while supporting them in developing to their full potential (OCDSB, 2015). The Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) indicates five Strategic Directions, including Catholicity, Relationship-building, Supportive Environments and Well-Being, Student Achievement, and Policy Governance (OCDSB, 2015). The organization is essentially governed by these directions; therefore, it is important to understand the interconnectedness between these areas and their impact on organizational structure.

First, Catholicity is the foundation upon which OCDSB is built, and the curriculum and daily activities consistently integrate teachings of the Catholic faith. Faith is a fundamental component of all activities, from curriculum and community involvement, to staff and student faith development (OCDSB, 2015). Teachings of the Catholic faith align with the direction of Relationship-building, as a primary goal is facilitation of respectful communication between students, parents, staff, and community partners. Further, OCDSB states a commitment to maintaining a safe and respectful climate within school communities, while providing students with required school-level supports (OCDSB, 2015). Due to established community relationships currently in place, if OCDSB lacks either the resources or personnel, school and/or school board staff can call on community partners for assistance. OCDSB would not be able to

rely on community partners as a key strategy to help meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable students without these strong community relationships.

The key Strategic Direction of Student Achievement is curriculum-based, centred on narrowing achievement gaps and alignment with Ministry goals, but this directive also reflects the belief that all students can learn and development of a student's strengths and gifts should be a primary focus. It calls for collaborative learning, encouraging school and board leaders to access job-embedded professional learning while solving difficulties in a collaborative manner. Collaboration, a key component of Student Achievement, is also found in Policy Governance where it reflects the necessity to align human and financial resources across Strategic Directions. The need to maintain a balanced budget is also reflected in Policy Governance (OCDSB, 2015). Therefore, while each direction could exist independently, it is the integration of each of these directions that supports the development of the Problem of Practice (PoP).

Central to the PoP is the fact that as a publicly-funded school board, OCDSB must provide educational services to all students, including those identified with special needs. For the purposes of this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP), special needs are recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Education (*2016-2017 Education Funding*, 2016) as students who have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and/or who receive special education programs and/or services. The Ontario Ministry of Education recognizes five primary categories of exceptionalities including Behaviour, Intellectual, Communication, Physical, and Multiple exceptionalities (Ontario Ministry of Education, *2016-2017 Education Funding*, 2016). Classroom placement is determined at a system-level IPRC meeting which is attended by at least three people, including the family, school principal, and a supervisory officer or designate (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Other staff and/or community agencies may be invited, determined by diagnosis and/or services, a practice aligning

with both Ministry of Education protocols and OCDSB's Strategic Direction of Relationship-building (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005; OCDSB, 2015; Bennett, Dworet, & Weber, 2013).

Based on a philosophy of providing an education to all students in the least restrictive setting possible, OCDSB aims to provide an inclusion-based education with the goal of integrating into classrooms with same-aged, typically developing peers, a common practice in most publicly-funded Ontario schools (Bennet et al., 2013). However, integration of students with special needs, as it occurs in OCDSB, often requires additional staff support that necessitates significant financial output by the school board.

Financial output increased for many school boards over the past decade. In 2001, funding was determined based upon prior funding applications rather than the number of students requiring special needs services (Superintendent, personal communication, April 12, 2016; Education Officer, personal communication, April 15, 2016). Huge inequities in funding emerged, with the per pupil amount ranging from \$339.58 to \$1673.35 between boards (Peel District School Board, n.d.; Alphonso, 2014; Douglas, 2014). These inequities were brought to the attention of the Ministry of Education who then developed a Special Education Funding Working Group whose purpose was to redesign funding allocations for publicly-funded Ontario schools (Finlay, 2014). Only recently has this gross inequity in funding been addressed, with payment equalization to be completed within the next two years (Sirisko, 2016; Ontario Ministry of Education, *2016-2017 Education Funding*, 2016; Education Officer, personal communication, April 15, 2016; Superintendent, personal communication, April 12, 2016).

Disproportionate funding meant some boards, including OCDSB, had to significantly increase their special education budgets to provide special needs supports throughout this period (Alphonso, 2014; Douglas, 2014; Superintendent, personal communication, May 29, 2015).

Consequently, increasing expenditures was further exacerbated with the Ministry of Education mandate to balance school board budgets (Superintendent, personal communication, May 29, 2015). Balancing the budget is difficult when faced with the rising number of students receiving special education services in publicly funded Ontario schools. Bennet, Dworet, and Weber (2013), for example, cite a 43.2 percent rise in elementary students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder between 2007 and 2012, with high school diagnoses rising 156 percent within the same time frame. The authors further indicate that the percentage of non-identified students receiving special education services continues to rise.

With increasing numbers of students receiving special education services, educational leaders must carefully consider how to allocate resources, both human and financial, to best meet the needs of all students. Ultimately, the responsibility falls on school board leaders, including Supervisory Officers and the Director, to make difficult financial decisions that adhere to Ministry of Education policies to balance the school board budget while meeting the needs of special education students (Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association, 2005).

Since school board leaders are focused on the directive to balance the budget and maintain their legal responsibilities, the leadership style is hierarchical in nature. Administration must remain constantly informed and oversee much of the daily interactions, especially in high-expenditure departments such as Special Education. This is important, especially for OCDSB, as financial output for special education student needs have continued to rise even though funding amounts are just being equalized, further worsening funding shortfalls. However, these concerns aside, it is important to discuss current leadership practices at OCDSB.

When examining common practices of school board leaders at OCDSB, it reveals a distributed leadership approach as multiple leadership activities are dispersed amongst multiple leaders (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, & Hopkins, 2007; Harris,

2005a). For example, Harris and Spillane (2008) comment that a distributed leadership style “acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practice, whether or not they are formally designated or defined as leaders” (p. 31). Distributed leadership is evident throughout OCDSB as numerous groups exist comprised of superintendents, department level staff, teachers, and/or principals. Informing practice and crafting professional development activities, these individuals and/or groups present information to schools, school groups, and/or principal meetings as appropriate, crossing departmental boundaries, a key concept of distributed leadership as identified by Harris (2005b). Work from these groups is frequently recognized through board email to all staff members. Additionally, if individuals participate in practices which enhance leadership, such as volunteering within the local community, their work is recognized and celebrated, another key trait of distributed leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

Reflecting on distributed leadership traits, it appears this model is well suited to OCDSB given the geographical distance between schools. No longer can a single leader oversee the entire organization; instead, a focus on the development of school teams has helped to develop expertise in areas which are unique to each school situation (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

Distributed leadership continues to be applicable for this OIP, but it will be complemented with transformational leadership as I am seeking to change perceptions of students with

Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

This OIP is relevant for school and school board leaders, as well as teachers, as it offers a comprehensive method of examining the factors impeding organizational change. This is achieved with a PESTE analysis and an examination of factors using Bolman and Deal’s (2013) Four Frames model and Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs.

Leadership Problem of Practice

Role and Responsibility

I am not currently working as a teacher, but am certified through the Ontario College of Teachers with primary, junior, and intermediate (history) qualifications. I work within the Special Education Department in a consultative manner and provide support for students and teachers throughout the school district which spans several hours from its northern to southern points. Responsibilities include conducting observations, participation in team and case conferences, providing professional development workshops, agency referrals, and development and/or participation in the writing of Individual Education Plans, and behaviour, safety, and/or medical plans. I also prepare and submit annual funding applications to the Ontario Ministry of Education for students with extensive safety and/or medical needs. I primarily support students with Autism, but preparation of these funding applications often necessitates my involvement with students who present with multiple concerns, including medical and behavioural needs.

Evolution of the Problem of Practice

Over several years, I have been involved in meetings for students identified with Developmental Disabilities and many of these students exhibit challenging behaviour. It was in one of these meetings that a potential PoP began to emerge, which was at first a very broad question inquiring how to develop a sense of belonging for students with special needs. As the years progressed and conversations and reflections on my PoP deepened, I began to more specifically focus on a problem affecting educational leaders. This led me to a PoP that seeks to investigate how school and school board leaders can increase the sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

Tools are required to help determine the effectiveness of any change plan, and within this OIP, I will use three tools to measure organizational change. First, Bolman and Deal's (2013)

Four Frames Model will provide the framework as a change readiness tool. Second, Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs will serve as the Problem of Practice Tool. Finally, the Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012), will serve as the Equity Audit Tool. These tools have been chosen as they can be specifically adapted to the needs of my organization. While each one may be used in isolation, there will be some overlap between the tools within the PoP that will further strengthen the use of each tool.

School and school board leaders within this OIP, specifically refer to school principals and school board level staff. Within the scope of this OIP, Developmental Disability is considered an Intellectual identification within the IPRC process at OCDSB. There is no universally accepted definition of Developmental Disability, but Bennett et al. (2013) define it as three interrelated factors including sub-average intellectual functioning and problems in adaptive behaviour, both of which occurred during the developmental period. People diagnosed with a Developmental Disability usually fall within 1st or 2nd percentiles in standardized testing. References to Developmental Disability within the OIP will therefore be based upon this definition.

Challenging behaviour as defined within this OIP, refers to physical behaviour that results in "aggressive actions that are the outward expression of feelings of agitation, anxiety, fear or panic attack" (Marks & Marks, 2016, p. 118). Unpredictable and aggressive behaviour can lead to ostracism by peers (Child Developmental Psychologist, personal communication, October 12, 2011; Greene, 2008; Greene, 2013; Marks & Marks, 2016).

These challenging behaviours have often been the catalyst for my attendance at meetings, and in conversation with school and/or school board staff, as well as parents and/or community agencies, we have struggled with supporting these challenging behaviours. OCDSB has an inclusion-based philosophy, and many of these students who exhibit challenging behaviour

attend in regular classrooms with the support of one or more Educational Assistants. The high level of required staff support is causing concerns regarding staff and student safety to be raised by school staff and union representatives at Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings (Union Representative, personal communication, October 1, 2015). Staff report feeling unsafe when working with these students and report other students are beginning to feel unsafe in the classroom due to the unpredictable nature of their classmate's behaviour. These feelings of uncertainty and unpredictability make it difficult to create a sense of belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour within their schools.

Perspectives on the Problem of Practice

Inclusion for All

The 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Education Act of 1980 brought the fight for equality for people with disabilities to the forefront of education (Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d.; Ontario Ministry of Education, *Equity and Inclusive Education*, 2014; Human Rights and Disabilities, 2009). Based upon the need for equality for all individuals regardless of ability, these documents changed delivery of public education in Ontario, as students with special needs could now be provided access to an education in regular classrooms with same-aged peers. Changes in policy encouraged publicly-funded Ontario school boards to integrate students with special needs into the same physical setting as their same-aged peers within their community schools, but integration has not always led to inclusion, nor has it led to the development of a sense of belonging for students with special needs (Bennett et al., 2013). It is important to note this critical component of the PoP, as physical inclusion is much different than establishing of a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging is a fundamental human need; it is the cornerstone of the human experience (Maslow, 1943; Pitonyak, 2004; Swinton, 2012; Prince & Hadwin, 2013; Crouch, Keys, & McMahon, 2014; Hyashi & Frost,

2006; Adler, 1998). In failing to address these social connections, many authors including Crouch, Keys, and McMahon (2014), Hyashi and Frost (2006), Rossetti and Goessling (2010), Marks and Marks (2016), and Pitonyak (2013) have presented findings indicating that many students with Developmental Disabilities are profoundly lonely.

Ontario Ministry of Education Documents

Today's educational leaders are struggling to find ways to assist these students in developing a sense of belonging. To support student well-being, the Ontario Ministry of Education has released policies and documents related to equity and inclusion with the expectation that school boards develop and/or update their Equity and Inclusion Policies to reflect current Ministry documents. Resources such as *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) and *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) have been created to provide additional guidelines for developing and/or amending Equity and Inclusive Education policies and linking to board and school improvement plans. In addition, *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119: Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools* (PPM No. 119) was developed and recently amended to support equity and inclusion in Ontario schools as "recent research shows that students who feel connected to teachers, to other students, and to the school itself do better academically" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 2-3). PPM No. 119 provides eight areas of focus to assist school boards in policy updates or development. Table 1 provides a summary of the eight areas of focus of PPM No. 119 and expected implementation within Ontario school boards.

Table 1

Summary of PPM No. 119: Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools

<i>Area of Focus</i>	<i>Implementation in School Boards</i>
Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices	School board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices will reflect principles of equity and inclusion
Shared and committed leadership	Schoolboard and school leaders act collaboratively towards an equitable and inclusive education Identification and removal of discriminatory biases and barriers
School-community relationships	Encourage continued and development of new school board and school partnerships with parents and community to support student achievement
Inclusive education and assessment practices	School boards and schools will use inclusive curriculum, assessment strategies, and instructional strategies that reflect diverse student needs
Religious accommodation	School boards will include a religious accommodation guideline for students and staff that aligns with the Ontario Human Rights Code
School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment	School board procedures will outline the reporting of discrimination and harassment School and school board monitoring occurs through school climate surveys
Professional learning	Professional learning activities based on equity and inclusion (e.g. topics such as antiracism) will be provided to board staff and trustees and shared with students and parents Collaboration is expected between community partners
Accountability and transparency	Equity and inclusive education policy posted on board website and is reflected in board and school improvement plans Ongoing communication with stakeholders Annual report to Ontario Ministry of Education from Director

These documents directly relate to the PoP in that an overall theme is to address well-being of all students. When board policies are developed, Ministry documents are reflected in the MYSP, a primary resource for school principals and school board level staff (OCDSB, 2015). When examining the MYSP of OCDSB the underlying themes of the Ministry documents are well-reflected. For example, the Strategic Direction of Well-Being focuses on equity, inclusion, and diversity. Another strategic direction includes Student Achievement, identifying the need for collaborative problem solving within the community and individual planning to meet the diverse goals of students. Other guiding principles such as promoting a sense of belonging from *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) can be found throughout the MYSP (OCDSB, 2015).

Similarly, one of the foundational goals in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) is to ensure equity through promoting feelings of engagement and inclusion for all students. The goal is for Ontario's public schools to become places of diversity where all individuals are reflected and celebrated within the school community, regardless of background or personal circumstance. A primary objective of this document is to collaboratively promote students' well-being, a concept reflected in my PoP as many students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour are involved with community agencies that support families across home and school environments. A key statement in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, indicates "students cannot achieve academically if they feel unsafe at school" (p. 15). This statement is extremely relevant to my PoP as recent conversations with union representatives reflect similar feelings, relating that some students report feeling unsafe around their peers who display challenging behaviours (Union Representative, personal communication, October 1, 2015).

Student Aggression at School

In their recent work, Einfeld, Tonge, and Clarke (2013) report that children with Developmental Disabilities are at an increased risk of developing behaviour problems as compared to typically developing peers. The authors acknowledge that behaviours such as aggression, destructiveness, self-injurious behaviour, and/or stereotyped mannerisms, impact not only the individual and family functioning, but functioning within the larger community. The larger community encompasses schools, and these aggressive behaviours lead to safety concerns relevant not only within OCDSB, but across the province, for example in Trillium Lakelands District School Board (“De-escalating Aggression in Schools Taking Priority”, 2006), York Region District School Board (2015), and Lakehead Public School Board (2016). Indeed, these provincial problems are likely indicative of a larger national problem, as presented by a recent CBC article. This article, “NBTA Claims Teachers Donning Kevlar Clothing in Classrooms” (2016) reports that the New Brunswick Teachers’ Association is calling on the Department of Education to conduct a full review of inclusion policies as the frequency and severity of violence that is occurring in the classrooms is creating unsafe environments. Therefore, the PoP is relevant for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour, as it helps to identify the support that may be required to prevent or reduce the challenging behaviour. It will also address feelings of fear amongst staff and peers and may help to identify additional supports that staff and other students may require to help them feel safe at school.

Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice

To better understand how school and school board leaders may be able to develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour, it is useful to conduct a political, economic, sociological, technological, and ecological/environmental (PESTE) analysis as presented by Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols (2016).

PESTE Analysis

Political factors. PPM No. 119 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013), is the primary political factor (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016) impacting the PoP. PPM No. 119 was developed to support three core priorities established by the Ontario Ministry of Education which include high levels of student achievement, reduced gaps in student achievement, and increased public confidence in publicly funded education. The Ministry identifies that student success can only be achieved through an equitable and inclusive education system (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). While the earlier version of PPM No. 119 focused on antiracism and ethnocultural policies, the recent update addresses additional factors, or the intersection of factors, including race, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, gender, and/or class that can act as barriers preventing student success. The memorandum acknowledges these barriers and provides direction to Ontario school boards on the review, development, implementation, and monitoring of their respective Equity and Inclusive Education Policies. In the 2010-2011 school year, school boards were directed to develop an Equity and Inclusion Policy that addressed eight focus areas in alignment with Ministry priorities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013).

Ontario school boards must align policies and procedures to those designated by the Ontario Ministry of Education, and within some of these policies, there is a significant factor that cannot be overlooked in the PESTE analysis. Throughout the Ontario Ministry of Education documents, *PPM No. 119* (2013) and *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* (2014), the goal of an inclusive school environment is stated, but it does not state how this goal will be supported other than through policy development. In failing to identify how supports will be provided, this becomes a critical

point in the PESTE analysis, as school boards are hard-pressed to allocate additional funding given the challenging behaviour presented by some students in some Ontario schools.

Another political factor that affects the PoP stems from union-mandated staffing processes. Further discussed in Bolman and Deal's (2013) Structural Frame, the inability to place support staff according to their qualifications and/or experience may negatively impact the PoP. Current union contracts dictate seniority as the key determinant of employee placement, but when individuals are placed in positions based on years of service, OCDSB may not be able to provide the most appropriate level of support for some of our most vulnerable students. Although outside the scope of this PoP, this consideration could be brought forward to the Ministry level.

Economic factors. Strongly correlating to political factors, the economic factors affecting the PoP also originate from Ontario Ministry of Education policies. There have been significant discrepancies in special education funding allocations in Ontario school boards for over a decade (Brown, 2014; Peel District School Board, n.d.; Superintendent, personal communication, April 12, 2016; Education Officer, personal communication, April 15, 2016). Resulting from these discrepancies, some school boards, including OCDSB, have spent millions more than their counterparts to provide the same level of special education services for their students (Brown, 2014; Superintendent, personal communication, April 12, 2016). When one realizes the lack of equitable funding coincided with a stagnation in specialized funding over the last decade, it is no wonder that further strains are being placed on already taxed special education budgets. Although this additional specialized funding was designed to support students with complex medical and/or behavioural needs, it only covers a portion of employee salary and benefits, even though wages and the cost of benefit packages continued to rise over the same period (Superintendent, personal communication, April 12, 2016). This history of unfair funding and

funding that falls far short of school board expenditures has left some boards, including OCDSB, struggling to meet the Ontario Ministry of Education mandate for a balanced budget.

Sociological factors. Dovetailing the economic difficulties faced by school boards, Ryan and Tuters (2014) and Ryan (2006) have indicated that because of their disability, students and their families are often marginalized. Recently, a representative from a local non-profit community agency presented socio-economic information with a regional focus (Non-Profit Agency Representative, personal communication, February 11, 2015). If school and school board leaders were to examine specific residential information as it applies to students within the school board through the lens of potential organizational change, they may be able to determine external factors which may be impacting not only student behaviour, but overall potential school performance. The examination of external factors would align nicely with *PPM No. 119*, in which school boards are expected to consult with community agencies regarding the development and/or amendments to their Equity and Inclusive Education Policies (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013).

Technological factors. Aside from political and economic factors, Cawsey et al. (2016) encourage potential change leaders to examine technological factors impacting organizational change. The PoP is specifically affected by Special Education Amount (SEA) funding, which is distributed through a claims-based system to assist in the purchase of technology and/or adaptive equipment to help students access the Ontario curriculum, an alternative program, and/or to attend school. Qualified specialists submit written recommendations to the school board which are then submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Education. School boards pay an annual deductible for each claim (Ontario Ministry of Education, *Special Education Funding Guidelines*, 2016).

One factor that impacts some students within the PoP centres around the portability of these claims. If a student changes schools or moves into a new school district, their sending

school board is expected to transfer the student's equipment within six weeks of receiving the request. My personal experience is this does not always happen. Sometimes, equipment other than what the student was using prior to leaving his/her board has been sent. For example, older laptops have been sent to my school board, and the student reports that the piece of equipment is not the same as he/she was using the month before. Consequently, additional expenditures may be incurred as OCDSB must purchase new equipment, as there is no effective method of tracking equipment through the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Another technological factor to consider is that some students, because of their diagnosis, do not qualify for Special Education Amount funding as it is not recommended by a designated professional. Basing access to technology on the results of standardized testing (Ryan, 2006) or diagnosis, further exacerbates exclusive practices. However, when school or school board leaders or partners from a community agency identify that a student requires technology to assist with education and/or daily living activities, they can work together to determine if alternative funding is available. For students who may be adversely affected due to socio-economic factors (Ryan, 2006), the importance of ensuring access to technology that can assist with inclusion cannot be understated. Knowledge of the student's personal situation is imperative, and armed with information and proper signed consent forms, school and/or school board leaders can advocate for external support on their behalf.

Environmental factors. The final factor to consider as recommended by Cawsey et al. (2016) is the environmental factor. Encompassing an array of areas, this includes changes to the classroom setting, such as seat placement and/or lighting, and the use of adaptive equipment, as recommended by Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Physiotherapists, and/or Psychologists. School and school board leaders can encourage classroom teachers and

support staff to integrate all possible recommendations, providing the opportunity to mediate if there are concerns from either classroom staff or community professionals.

An additional environmental factor to consider centres around the physical environment of the school itself. In *PPM No. 119*, school and school board leaders are encouraged to ensure students feel engaged and empowered through the curriculum and programs offered at school (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). For example, visuals portraying students with varying abilities should be evident throughout the curriculum, and guest speakers should be reflective of Ontario's diversity. Leaders may also reflect upon disability-specific awareness days, and how strengths and struggles of various disabilities are acknowledged and integrated into school learning throughout the year. School leaders can also consider how differing abilities are visually presented throughout the school such as professional and student artwork and general picture displays. These factors must be addressed before organizational change can occur.

The Four Frames Model

Bolman and Deal (2013) provide a Four Frames model as a method of examining potential organizational change. The Four Frames are comprised of Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic Frames. These frames provide key assumptions to guide organizational leaders in reflecting how the organization currently functions. This is a necessary step to identify issues that may be preventing organizational change.

Structural frame. A key assumption of Bolman and Deal's (2013) Structural Frame is that organizations exist to achieve a goal. The goal of OCDSB is to provide an education to students within the school district. When examining the second assumption, pertaining to the appropriate and specialized division of labour, my school board is organized hierarchically, designed around specific roles and responsibilities. All employees are grouped by knowledge or skills, with most staff positions and/or responsibilities mandated either by the Ontario Ministry

of Education (i.e. supervisory officers), or unions (Human Resources Administrator, personal communication, September 17, 2015). The inflexibility of these positions, due to clearly delineated job expectations within this structure, is hindering a coordination of efforts, Bolman and Deal's (2013) third assumption. Further, the structure, specifically union-mandated job responsibilities, is preventing rationality from prevailing over collective agreements, and unions are not flexing to meet current organizational needs, Bolman and Deal's (2013) fourth and fifth key assumption, respectively. Strictly adhering to expectations, without opportunity for negotiation or change, the unions are inhibiting much needed change and progress as contracts are preventing co-ordination of job requirements and staff placement that will ensure a better fit between individuals and departments. Furman (2012) and Adler (2010), indicate that these issues are not unique to OCDSB, reporting a major problem of teacher unions in the United States is that seniority rules necessitate junior teachers being let go ahead of senior teachers, regardless of performance or qualifications when positions become redundant. Transience of employees negatively impacts the opportunity to build healthy workplace relationships between employees (Price, 2013). Additionally, Furman (2012) comments that unions hinder teacher participation as some teachers who may be willing to go above and beyond contractual obligations, for example, in after school activities, are "too intimidated by their union to try" (para. 3). Therefore, the unions are failing to allow the flexibility required to meet the changing needs of the organization.

To meet student needs and fulfill Ministry expectations, it is necessary to maintain the structural hierarchy. However, maintaining the system as it stands makes it difficult, if not impossible, to incorporate any additional responsibilities without significant restructuring on many levels. Lack of flexibility in support staff roles, specifically Educational Assistants, is a challenge addressed within the PoP.

Human resources frame. The assumptions of the Human Resource Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013), indicate strained relationships exist between employees and the employer. OCDSB is adversely affected by absenteeism as additional costs are incurred, and students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour are negatively impacted as changes in support staff creates instability. Employees report two issues. First, they indicate feelings of disempowerment. Secondly, they indicate feeling unsafe in the workplace. Employee union representatives report both factors are contributing to increased staff absenteeism (Human Resources Administrator, personal communication, October 1, 2015; Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015).

The impact of relationships on the work environment is also reflected in the business sphere. Brun and Cooper (2009) note the importance of human relationships and working together as a team as critical components for organizational success. “Humans are social creatures. We need contact with other people, we need their recognition, and we need their support” (Brun & Cooper, 2009, p. 41). Price (2013), in her study of Indianapolis charter schools, found “when individuals work around other workers who are satisfied with their job, their coworker attitudes also improve” (p. 212-213). Price (2013) and Brun and Cooper (2009) contend that when workers are happy and committed to their job, it leads to growth for the company and creates a sense of community in which employees can support one another. This is vital to this OIP as school teams work closely together supporting one or more students; creating a sense of community can help to create an internal support network and reduce feelings of disempowerment.

It is also important to note that unions are helping to bring forward employee concerns to OCDSB administration. Deery, Iverson, Buttigieg, and Zatzik (2013), identified that employee involvement in the union is linked to employee attendance. In short, the authors identified that

union citizenship behaviour supporting individual members (UCBI) was related to lower levels of employee turnover and employee absenteeism. “UCBI can enhance opportunities for the resolution of differences between employees and their managers, and act as a possible substitute for disruptive individual behaviour in the form of absenteeism or reduced work effort” (Deery, Iverson, Buttigieg, & Zatzik, 2013, p. 222). This study, although conducted at a large unionized banking organization in Australia, it is relevant for OCDSB as it supports the necessity for administration to work in conjunction with employee unions in addressing concerns, especially as OCDSB employees currently feel disempowered.

In regards to employee safety, Kocakulah, Kelley, Mitchell, and Ruggieri’s (2016) study supports concerns being reported by employee unions at OCDSB in finding that employee stress caused by dangerous working conditions can significantly increase employee absenteeism. While not all employees at OCDSB face potential bodily injury, it is important to note that some employees require medical or hospital treatment following a student-initiated injury, so the threat of injury from a student is a legitimate concern and must be addressed. This is significant to this OIP, as increased absenteeism indicates the organization is failing to meet the primary assumption of the Human Resource Frame, that of serving human needs (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Additional concerns within the Human Resources Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) are being indicated as some employees report feeling a lack of student-specific training prior to being assigned to a student with challenging behaviour. Others have reported little to no consultation on the development of student safety and/or behaviour plans (Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015). This is important, as Deery et al. (2013) report when unions bring forward employee concerns to the organization, it offers a greater potential for positive resolution. Currently, these concerns are preventing some employees from engaging in meaningful work, therefore preventing a good fit between the employees and the

organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013), and negatively impacting some students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

Political frame. Potential change agents must also understand the assumptions of the Political Frame, especially as they relate to publicly-funded Ontario school boards. The scarcity of resources is an important consideration as inequitable funding has plagued some school boards more than others over the past decade (Alphonso, 2014; Douglas, 2014; Superintendent, personal communication, May 29, 2015). Understanding the impact that lack of funding has had on OCDSB is important, as strained finances has led to the development of coalitions that often experience conflict regarding allocation of financial resources (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Potential change leaders will need to understand that parents are one coalition that advocate for individual support for their child. However, some students require higher levels of support than others, and some will require lifelong care. The goal is to help each student reach his/her full potential with the least amount of support to promote independence (Special Education Staff Member #1, personal communication, June 21, 2016). Teachers, a second coalition, advocate for classroom support. Principals, a third coalition, advocate for additional school support. Finally, administration and the Special Education department, a combined fourth coalition, attempt to define equitable human resource allocation for students with special needs, while maintaining the budget determined by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Symbolic frame. Bolman and Deal's (2013) Symbolic Frame encourages organizational leaders to reflect upon the meaning behind actions. Aligning with the environmental factor of the PESTE analysis from Cawsey et al. (2016), the Symbolic Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) encourages potential change leaders to be cognizant of how people with Developmental Disabilities are reflected in the everyday school environment and student-specific programming. For example, in reflecting on the process of assigning routine school jobs such as milk delivery,

school leaders can pair students with Developmental Disabilities together, or alternatively, with a typically-developing peer to increase a sense of social inclusion. Reflecting on school jobs can help determine if stereotypes reinforce the idea that specific jobs may only be applicable for special needs students.

Ryan (2006) posits that when educational leaders are more aware of inclusive practices, it leads to a more socially just community. Further, Shields (2000) notes the possibility of students belonging to more than one community within a school, as some students may be included with typically developing peers for some activities and then paired with students who achieve similarly in other activities, such as academics. This would allow students to create friendships across groups. What is important, is that these groups “be grounded in respect, belonging, and mutual acceptance” (Shields, 2000, p.287).

Becoming aware of how students with Developmental Disabilities are integrated into school activities can help principals develop an understanding about the school’s social community and how it may be evolving for these students. Shields (2000) reinforced this concept, encouraging consideration of relationship-building for all students in the school, including those that may not be able to reciprocate the friendship. In this role, principals are in a unique position to help set the vision and direction for change (Muijs et al., 2010). Exerting influence on staff motivation and beliefs about working conditions and classroom practices, principals can affect change in regards to perceptions about students with Developmental Disabilities. Consequently, classroom practices can be positively or negatively impacted because of school leaders (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Harris, 2005a).

Leadership – Focused for Vision for Change

School and school board leaders must be committed to raise awareness of organizational goals, especially as they relate to policies and/or programs mandated by the Ontario Ministry of

Education. In that regard, it is important for school and school board leaders to consider their leadership style and/or traits. Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) suggest certain traits may be indicative of greater success for leaders, referencing qualities such as open-mindedness and a willingness to learn from others. A vital aspect of the OIP is the ability for school and school board leaders to be open-minded and committed to change, and when they display a willingness to consider alternative perspectives in regards to perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities, they demonstrate, through words and actions, their willingness to learn from others (Leithwood et al., 2008). Their behaviour also sets the expectation that staff be equally committed to incorporating this change.

Transformational and Distributed Leadership

I believe most school board employees choose a profession in education because they want to have a positive impact on students, they want to make a difference in the lives of children. I believe this because almost every employee who works with students in OCDSB must now have a college and/or university degree in their chosen field (Human Resources Administrator, personal communication, June 6, 2016). Additionally, many employees attend training on their own time, through e-learning or in person (Special Education Staff Member #2, personal communication, February 24, 2014). If employees were not committed to further supporting their students, additional learning opportunities would not be as frequently accessed, as extrinsic rewards, such as bonuses or financial incentives, are not provided by the school board. This commitment to education is an important foundation for initiating organizational change at the school and school board level.

Leadership is undeniably a social process, and may be one of the most significant factors that affect employee engagement (Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009) which is a key assumption of Bolman and Deal's (2013) Human Resources Frame. This social process is represented in

OCDSB's MYSP (2015) which comments on the need to develop respectful and collaborative work relationships within the school board and community agencies. Collaboration is an important trait of distributed leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Harris, 2005b; Harris et al., 2007). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, distributed leadership is currently used at OCDSB. It continues to be an applicable leadership style for this OIP as implementation will occur across levels within OCDSB, including administration, the Special Education Department, school principals, and classrooms. However, to better achieve the goals outlined in this OIP, distributed leadership will be supported with transformational leadership, a leadership style also based on collaboration (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004).

The importance of collaboration in educational settings is further stressed as Fullan, Cuttress, and Kilcher (2009) suggest change should occur at three levels, including school/community, district, and state. Leithwood et al., (2008) emphasize the important role of school leaders in organizational change as they build "productive relations with parents and the community, and connecting the school to its wider environment" (p. 30). Harris (2014) confirms the influential role that distributed leadership plays in education, commenting it "is primarily concerned with the practice of leadership rather than specific leadership roles or responsibilities" (para. 2). For distributed leadership to be an effective component of this OIP, school board administration must create the opportunity for distributed leadership to occur, and when this happens, Harris (2014) identifies that it will likely contribute to positive change and school improvement.

Positive change can also be initiated through transformational leadership. First coined by Downton in 1973 and expanded upon by Burns, (Northouse, 2016), transformational leadership has evolved over the past four decades. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), for example, posit that transformational leadership is founded upon three pillars, with the first resting on the moral

character of the leader. Second, transformational leadership should have the values embedded in the leader's vision, providing the opportunity for followers to accept or reject such vision. Third, the process should be socially ethical and one which both the leader and followers actively pursue. Transformational leaders set examples for their followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999) and "engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978, p. 39). Further, transformational leaders collaborate with their followers to solve problems within the organization, essentially preparing them for additional responsibility (Bass et al., 2003). Therefore, adopting transformational leadership in conjunction with distributed leadership is pivotal to this OIP as it seeks to change perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003) indicate that transformational leadership "is more likely to reflect social values and to emerge in times of distress and change" (p. 208), supporting the decision to implement transformational leadership within this OIP. Currently, staff at OCDSB are indicating they are in a period of distress, as heightened emotions exist amongst employees due to work refusals and submission of violent incident reports that detail student aggression towards employees (Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015). These violent incident reports indicate staff do not currently feel safe within schools at OCDSB.

It is important to note staff concerns are currently being addressed by administration and employee unions due to good working relationships. Efforts to address these concerns and focus on student development are also reflected in the MYSP (OCDSB, 2015). Fullan et al. (2009), reflect upon the importance of good relationships, and this is important as OCDSB not only has good internal relations, but equally sound relations with local and district community partners and provincial level staff from the Ontario Ministry of Education. These relationships, and the

maintenance of this support across school, district, and provincial boundaries, is vital as this OIP encompasses not only transformational leadership, but also distributed leadership which encourages all parties to work together. Currently, school board staff work in conjunction with the Ministry of Education staff, while school board staff, school leaders, and school staff work in conjunction with local and district community agencies. This is distributed leadership, but for successful implementation of my OIP, it will be necessary for school and school board leaders to have a clear understanding of the definition of distributed leadership, and what their roles will be for organizational change to be effective. This is because full implementation will require individuals to be “accountable and responsible for their leadership actions; new leadership roles created, collaborative teamwork is the modus operandi and inter-dependent working is a cultural norm. Distributed leadership is about collective influence” (Harris, 2014, para. 14).

This collective influence can begin with transformational leaders who develop “school norms, values, beliefs and assumptions that are student centred and support continuing professional development” (Harris, 2005a, p. 80). When combined with practices of distributed leadership, it places school principals in a prime position to effect change within their schools, as it is primarily through school leadership that organizational changes will be implemented. Leithwood et al., (2008) recognizing the importance of school leadership, comment, “school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning” (p. 27). The Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) references this critical point in both *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119* and *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*, and it is vital that school and school board leaders acknowledge this when examining potential organizational change.

While teacher attitudes towards integration may enhance or adversely affect student achievement and behaviour, Ingram (1997) further acknowledges that some teachers may lack

confidence when developing student-specific instruction. This is especially true for teachers who are planning for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Strong principal leadership, fully invested in organizational change, is necessary to support staff and determine any additional resources that may be required, therefore helping alleviate some of this apprehension. Therefore, distributed leadership, supported by transformational leadership, is best suited for addressing the PoP that seeks to understand how school and school board leaders can develop a sense of belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

Organizational Change Readiness

Within the PoP are underlying needs that must be articulated to investigate potential organizational change. First and foremost, it must be identified that the challenging behaviour exhibited by students with Developmental Disabilities is being raised as a serious concern within OCDSB by teacher and support staff unions, school board leaders, and community agencies. Union representatives and the Human Resource Department at OCDSB report that staff are calling in sick or taking stress leaves due to aggressive behaviour that some students are exhibiting (Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015). Supply staff must be called in, resulting in additional financial expenditures for OCDSB which places additional strain on an already-taxed budget (Superintendent, personal communication, October 1, 2015). Calling in supply staff for coverage only serves to provide a temporary solution as employee needs are not being met. The future state would realize a reduction in the amount of sick time and/or stress leaves for employees as it directly relates to concerns regarding student aggression. Absences that are directly related to student aggression could then be followed up with the employee, the employee's immediate supervisor, board level staff, and, if applicable, a union representative. It is important these meetings not be punitive in

nature; instead, they should be supportive and provide an opportunity to dialogue about potential supports required to help both the employee and student experience greater success.

Wilson, Douglas, and Lyon (2011), in their study of teachers in British Columbia, Canada, refer to the importance of understanding the impact of student violence against employees, specifically teachers. They noted that student violence against teachers is a serious problem causing teacher burnout, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), increased stress, and feelings of fear. Their study indicated violent incidents can have physical and psychological effects on teachers, and may negatively affect teaching ability and/or be reflected in increased absenteeism. In his study on the effects of student violence against teachers in Norway, Skåland (2016) found similar results, and suggested the importance of a supportive administrative response when violence occurs. This is an important consideration for OCDSB leaders.

A second consideration for leaders at OCDSB pertains to the process of developing student safety and/or behaviour plans. Some support staff report lack of consultation when these plans are developed (Joint Health & Safety Committee Meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015), and since they work with the student(s) daily, their input is not only valuable, it is necessary for student success. The future state would be represented with participation of all involved school staff on safety and/or behaviour plans, with a reduction in the annual number of violent incident reports.

Reflecting upon current Professional Development procedures revealed an additional gap. Past practice has included board-wide learning on Professional Development days that include a range of topics and presenters, however, learning was not followed up with job-embedded training. Sparks (2015), The Institute for Education Leadership (2013), and OCDSB's MYSP (2015) all reference the need for job-embedded training within professional development. If this training is incorporated into a well-devised, long-range professional development plan created in

consultation with union representatives and employees, it can provide direction for professional growth.

A final gap exists within the placement practices for support staff of OCDSB. Currently, support staff including Educational Assistants and noon-hour aides are governed by the same union. With seniority rules applicable to all, regardless of position, it is possible for noon-hour aides to be hired in the position of an Educational Assistant once enough seniority has accrued. However, noon-hour aides may not have the same level of training as an Educational Assistant, with the result that some employees may not be formally educated for their position, and therefore potentially not as well trained to support some students with challenging behaviour.

The future state of OCDSB would be represented by a reduction in the annual number of violent incident reports as well as a reduction in staff absenteeism. All involved school staff would be included as active participants in the development of student support plans. Formal and informal suspensions for students with Developmental Disabilities would be reduced. A long-range professional development plan would be created including board-wide consultation that is reflective of staff and student needs, documenting the practices and resources required to address needs, and a timeline for implementation. Finally, placement practices for all support staff would be streamlined and reflective of employee skills, not solely based upon seniority.

Communicating the Need for Change

Ryan (2016) notes that educational leaders, especially those interested in social justice topics, need to assess the organization before embarking on a change path. Since the goal of developing a sense of social inclusion for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour has its roots in social justice, a strong framework is required to help communicate organizational change. Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model provides school and school board leaders with a solid theoretical foundation through which organizational

change can be examined, helping leaders to identify change readiness. Including Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic Frames, this holistic model is well-equipped to guide school and school board leaders as they undertake organizational change. In relation to the PoP, Bolman and Deal's (2013) Structural Frame can be used to examine the organizational goal of providing supports for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Emotions are currently high amongst employees, as communicated through employee unions. Although concerns are typically being presented to school board leaders in a calm, rational manner, it is becoming increasingly apparent that structural inefficiencies are impacting the daily operations of OCDSB. Some employees, usually through their designated union, are reporting that they feel ill-equipped to manage and/or address aggressive behaviour of some students. They also cite concerns regarding insufficient training and a lack of involvement in the development of safety and/or behaviour plans. Since each of these concerns has been addressed through training and professional development at OCDSB, the fact that these concerns continue to be raised are indicative of a larger problem, revealing that changes are required within the Structural Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Bolman and Deal's (2013) Human Resource Frame Based is based on a key assumption that organizations and people need each other, and since organizations exist to serve human needs, a poor fit between the two will result in suffering for either the individual, the organization, or both. Currently, although staff absenteeism is a major Human Resources factor that must be addressed in relation to the PoP, Dweck (2006) presents an alternative idea that may help to understand the difficulties faced within this frame. Offering the idea of fixed or growth mindsets, Dweck (2006) remarks that mindsets can encourage or prevent change as an individual's potential effort and ability to risk change is directly affected by one's mindset. Considering how to address staff mindset is significant, especially when school and school board

leaders are trying to attend to concerns within the Human Resources frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Dweck (2006) states “the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life” (p. 6), and this is an important message for school and school board leaders. Understanding that these fixed or growth-mindsets are guiding the interpretation of events, Dweck (2006) posits that simply informing people about the two different mindsets may cause a shift in thinking that leads to changes in how people live their lives. When considered from the perspective of the Human Resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013), school board leaders may wish to incorporate mindset discussions and/or training into professional development for all staff. If mindset training is incorporated, some employees may begin to feel more comfortable and develop an understanding of the re-allocation of roles from academic to medical and/or behavioural supports for students (Superintendent, personal communication, October 1, 2015).

Next, through the Political Frame, Bolman and Deal (2013) suggest that change leaders should consider the impact of coalitions as they exist within organizations in an effort to secure resources. Central to the PoP is the impact of provincial inequities in funding over the last decade which have resulted in a significant funding shortfall for OCDSB. As the special education budget was accommodated to support special education student needs, departmental overspending led to depletion of school board reserves (Superintendent, personal communication, May 29, 2015). Now, as OCDSB has been mandated to balance the budget and maintain a prescribed surplus, school board leaders are trying to determine how to best allocate supports. These decisions must also be made while considering the various perspectives of each coalition. Therefore, school board leaders are tasked not only with allocating a finite amount of funding, but determining how to distribute funding in the most equitable manner possible.

Finally, school and school board leaders can reference the key assumptions of Bolman and Deal’s (2013) Symbolic Frame to assist them in examining potential interpretations of situations

as they exist within each school and the school board. Reflecting upon how students and community members with Developmental Disabilities are represented throughout the school and school board as well as curriculum and special events, educational leaders will be better equipped to identify successes as well as potential opportunities for change.

Alongside Bolman and Deal's (2013) theoretical Four Frames model, school and school board leaders can also reference Maslow's (1943) theoretical framework based on his Hierarchy of Needs. Providing a visual representation of five areas of need, Maslow's hierarchy can be discussed when striving to determine if unmet needs may be adversely affecting students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Beginning with basic needs that include physiological and safety needs, the second stage of the model encompasses psychological needs including belonging, love, and esteem. The apex of the pyramid, is self-fulfillment, where individuals realize their full potential. This pyramidal graphic can be incorporated into school and/or team meetings through which individuals are encouraged to address areas of need that may be prohibiting students with Developmental Disabilities from meeting their psychological needs in terms of friendship and a sense of belonging.

Framing of these issues will be two-fold. First, Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs can initially be used by school board leaders to communicate the need for organizational change to principals as school leaders. Explaining how these models can be used to identify factors that may be prohibiting change, initial conversations can provide school board leaders with a school perspective that may assist when communicating this information to the organizational staff. It is hoped that acceptance of these models will result when it is communicated that they will assist in complying with Ontario Ministry of Education policy and meeting the needs of students and staff on a larger scale.

Second, when school board leaders identify that Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs and a set Professional Development continuums (Equity Committee, 2012) will be incorporated into team and staff meetings where appropriate, it will provide principals the opportunity to bring potential concerns forward prior to school-level discussions. As most schools in OCDSB are supporting several children with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour, it can be communicated that these tools will be used to help identify external factors that may be negatively impacting student behaviour. It will be important that both school board and school leaders communicate that school board level support staff will continue to be available to guide implementation of these tools and support students with challenging behaviour.

Conclusion

OCDSB is facing a unique opportunity to undertake organizational change. Although employees are bringing forward significant concerns and administration is struggling with real financial issues, the desire to support a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour is providing an impetus to examine traditional methods and responses. While OCDSB currently practices distributed leadership, it appears that a more thorough explanation of expectations surrounding this leadership style is required, especially when considering how to achieve organizational change. Transformational leadership is also required, as this OIP seeks to change perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit this challenging behaviour; we do not want these students labelled by their behaviour, instead, we wish to examine their lagging skills and areas of need, determining what supports might be required to help reduce their aggressive behaviour in times of upset.

Factors affecting the PoP were also analyzed. A PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) identified political, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors affecting the PoP.

Supplementing the PESTE analysis, Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames Model was examined in which additional factors impacting the Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic Frames were examined.

Finally, the applicability of distributed and transformational leadership styles was discussed in relation to this OIP. Incorporating elements of both leadership styles will provide for the best outcomes of this organizational change, as this OIP not only seeks to change perceptions, but also begin change across levels within OCDSB. Multi-level change will be an important component of ensuring lasting change for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

In Chapter Two, the role of distributed and transformational leadership will be considered as they pertain to the frameworks of Bolman and Deal (2013) and Maslow (1943). An organizational analysis will examine the key assumptions of Bolman and Deal (2013) in relation to the PoP and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs will be examined as it relates to employee and student needs. Additionally, potential solutions to the OIP will be reviewed. The role of distributed and transformational leadership and their role in the OIP will be discussed in greater detail.

Chapter Two: Planning and Development

Introduction

If organizational change is to be relevant for school and school board leaders, any theoretical applications must be applicable to daily activities (Adams & Buetow, 2014). The connection to real-life experiences is a critical component of this OIP, as the PoP investigates how school and school board leaders can increase the sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Unless school and school board leaders understand the purpose behind the change and how it relates to developing a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities, it may be viewed as another “add-on” instead of something that may positively affect the quality of life for many students.

In the effort to attain positive change for these students, the OIP will focus on the frameworks presented by Bolman and Deal (2013) and Maslow (1943). Bolman and Deal’s (2013) Four Frames model provides organizational leaders with a set of key assumptions to reflect upon when considering organizational change. Guiding statements stem from Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic Frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013). These statements assist leaders in considering potential change through many lenses, as they pertain to the organization and the people within them. This is fundamental to this OIP as I strive to understand how organizational change may better meet the needs of students and employees.

Supplementing Bolman and Deal’s (2013) Four Frames model, I will also describe how Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs can be referenced to help understand the various factors that may be impacting student behaviour. Further, Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy aligns with the Human Resources Frame of Bolman and Deal (2013) as it identifies factors that may negatively impact employees, specifically as it pertains to their safety. The role of transformational and distributed leadership will be discussed in relation to these frameworks and from the perspective

of changing perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. This chapter will also present three potential solutions to address the PoP.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

Bolman and Deal (2013) state “...when we don’t know what to do, we do more of what we know” (p. 7). In other words, Bolman and Deal’s statement about organizations reveals that a leader’s inability to think critically about potential organizational change when faced with adversity leads to a continuous cycle of status quo. Status quo is not an option for leaders embarking on a path of organizational change as leaders striving for change are searching for and/or developing models to help reach organizational goals.

To reach the goals outlined in this OIP, transformational leadership was selected as the PoP seeks to change employee perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Distributed leadership will also be discussed as it pertains to OIP implementation; the first seeks to change the perception and develop a commitment to change, the latter involves a practical application of suggestions. Incremental change will be examined.

Incremental Change

Incremental change is most relevant to this OIP as it provides the opportunity for “...small-scale changes that allow the work unit...to move forward while maintaining coherency in purpose” (Carter et al., 2013, p. 942). Ontario’s public school system, especially as it pertains to the PoP, experiences a constant influx of change factors. These factors impact classrooms, making it difficult to maintain integrity of the system. However, maintaining the integrity of publicly-funded school boards is imperative because parent and community support is a critical component for closing achievement gaps and increasing student achievement (Council of Ontario Directors of Education, January 31, 2012). Support occurs when parents are actively engaged in their child’s education, which in turn is dependent upon the relationship between

parents, community, and local school. This relationship is subject to negative influence and “...the successes and failures of schools are scrutinized with a critical eye and reported widely” (Council of Ontario Directors of Education, January 31, 2012, p. 1). The importance of public perceptions of education cannot be diminished, especially considering recent articles, such as *De-escalating Aggression in Schools Taking Priority* (2006) and *NBTA Claims Teachers Donning Kevlar Clothing in Classrooms* (2016) that voice concerns reflective of school environments across Canada. Related to the challenging behaviour of students with special needs in publicly funded classrooms, the environment at OCDSB is no exception. School and school board staff are reporting concerns about increasingly aggressive student behaviour that is resulting in disequilibrium.

Disequilibrium is being experienced is because employees have not been able to adjust to maintain their effectiveness, nor have they been able to maintain positive work interactions, both necessary components of incremental change according to Carter et al. (2013). Changes regarding student support were initiated with little communication to support teams, and employees made the change, perhaps without fully understanding the complexities of some students. Employees then felt ill-prepared, regardless of training provided. Perceptions about students who exhibited challenging behaviour began to emerge, and have become more fixed over the past number of years.

Salge and Vera (2013) and Carter et al. (2014) indicate that incremental change is prompted by challenges experienced during typical work activities. Defined by Salge and Vera (2013) as experiential in nature and improving upon existing knowledge, it is also comprised of “purposeful adjustments that are small but ongoing and cumulative in effect” (Carter et al., 2014, p. 46). Since school and school board staff are reporting challenges they experience when working with students with Developmental Disabilities during typical work activities,

incremental change appears to be most appropriate. Morgan (2006) comments that small changes can create large effects as one small change can lead to another. In this way, although incremental changes may seem insignificant, they can bring about major change. Evidence of growth at OCDSB through incremental change can be confirmed through communication with union representatives. Once change initiatives have been established, growth would be indicated through a reduced number of employee reports concerning student aggression.

Leadership Styles

When considering incremental change, transformational leadership theory offers great potential for change within the scope of this OIP. I say this because in helping to shape the organizational environment, transformational leadership:

...inspires and motivates followers...fostering a desire to improve and achieve and demonstrating qualities such as optimism, excitement about goals, a belief in a future vision, a commitment to develop and mentor followers and an intention to attend to their individual needs (Smith & Bell, 2011, p. 59).

It will be important that school and school board leaders outwardly project these traits to help effect change, and for this reason, it will be strongly recommended that leaders who have these traits and support the change be carefully selected prior to pilot implementation of the OIP.

Transformational leaders inspire the development and adoption of a collective vision, encouraging all staff to believe in the possibility of achieving change goals (Carter et al., 2014; Smith & Bell, 2011; Griffith, 2004; Kovoov-Misra, 2009; Bass et al., 2003; Avolio et al., 2004). Relationship development is also an integral component of transformational leadership, so when relationships are built on mutual respect and trust, it leads to more open communication where staff feel more comfortable requesting support from leaders (Carter et al., 2013).

Relationship building is also an important component of distributed leadership. When leadership is dispersed amongst formal and informal leaders, those involved become actively engaged in the process of achieving a common goal (Harris, 2005a). Importantly, distributed leadership “focuses upon the interactions, rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal leadership roles. It is primarily concerned with *leadership practice* and how leadership influences organisational and instructional improvement” (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31). This interaction between school leaders and school staff as well as school and school board leaders will be critical to successful OIP implementation, especially during the initial pilot phase. This will allow the opportunity for involved staff to provide input regarding the feasibility of suggested outcomes, for example, tracking of behaviour and violent incidents, and ease of use of any developed forms. Suggested outcomes will be described in more detail later in this chapter.

Theoretical Frameworks

School and school board leaders can examine the potential for organizational change and build upon current knowledge using the Four Frames Model (Bolman & Deal, 2013) and the Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943). These frameworks provide educational leaders with a method of identifying potential factors that may be preventing and/or negatively impacting students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour from developing a sense of social belonging within their school community.

Next, the PoP will be examined through Bolman and Deal’s (2013) Four Frames Model, including the key assumptions of each frame. Beginning with the Structural Frame, organizational goals and the division of labour will be reviewed, as well as inter-departmental coordination. Factors affecting daily operations will be discussed through the lens of current circumstances, indicating potential difficulties that have arisen (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Examining the second frame, Human Resources, a poor fit will be revealed between the

organization and employees (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Coalitions and resource allocation as they impact the PoP will be discussed in Bolman and Deal's (2013) third, Political Frame. Their fourth and final frame, the Symbolic Frame, will address the symbology that exists within my organization as it pertains to the PoP, specifically for students with Developmental Disabilities. Activities and events will be reviewed, helping to identify strengths and weaknesses that are affecting the way that students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour are perceived within schools at OCDSB (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Bolman and Deal's (2013) framework will be supplemented with Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. This framework will be used to identify factors that may be affecting both students and staff at OCDSB, primarily focusing on the first three levels of needs, including physiological issues, safety concerns, and the sense of belonging and love (Maslow, 1943). These needs will be addressed hierarchically, as Maslow (1943) posits that each need must be met to some degree before moving up to the next level. His framework will be used to communicate to school and school board leaders the importance of meeting basic needs of both students and staff before a sense of social belonging can be established.

Critical Organizational Analysis

Understanding that there are multiple factors affecting this OIP, a deeper exploration of these factors is necessary to help inform the frameworks used to conduct the organizational analysis. While there are several change models available to organizational leaders such as The Change Path Model (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016) and Congruence Theory (Nadler & Tushman, 1980), Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames Model was adopted as this framework encourages a comprehensive review of factors that may be preventing the realization of OIP goals. While other frameworks including Herzberg's (1968) Hygiene-Motivation Theory and Marks and Marks (2016) Conscious Classroom model are also available that examine motivation

or factors impacting behaviour, Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs is most applicable to this OIP as it addresses relevant aspects that affect both staff and student needs. Since the PoP seeks to investigate how school and school board leaders can provide support that will increase the sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities, specifically those who exhibit challenging behaviour, these models (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Maslow, 1943) have the potential to offer a comprehensive review of factors that may inhibit achievement of this goal.

The Four Frames Model

The Four Frames Model (Bolman & Deal, 2013) presents a set of lenses through which organizational leaders can consider change opportunities, while Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs provides an overview of factors that may be adversely affecting both students and staff within an organization. Students and staff inevitably depend upon one another; it is relevant for perceptions to be examined from both viewpoints through dialogue with employees, employee unions, community agencies, students (if possible), and parents, the latter two important considerations from a social justice perspective (Ryan, 2006). This will allow for a comprehensive analysis of factors that may be impacting the PoP. Also, these connections seem natural; school boards, as well as organizations, are inherently social structures.

While the connections seem natural, they are by no means easy in terms of application. These frameworks encourage leaders to move out of their comfort zone while seeking to understand potential factors inhibiting the organization from reaching the desired state.

To reach the desired state, school and school board leaders can use Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames Model. A frame is defined as "a coherent set of ideas or beliefs forming a prism or lens that enables you to see and understand more clearly what goes on from day to day" (Bolman & Deal, p. 41). Each frame is based upon a group of key assumptions. Disturbance(s) within any frame are indicative that organizational change may need to be addressed.

Structural frame. Initially, school and school board leaders can consider Bolman and Deal's (2013) Structural Frame and reflect upon allocation of responsibilities across departments and the potential for integrating diverse efforts in the attempt to attain a common goal. Bearing these reflections in mind, school and school board leaders can then begin to address the six assumptions of this frame.

The first assumption is that the organization exists to achieve established goals and objectives (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The goal of OCDSB, like all other publicly-funded school boards in Ontario, is to "support every child, reach every student" (Ministry of Education, September 26, 2016). Publicly-funded school boards exist to provide an education to students within their school district. When this assumption, that of providing an education and supporting and reaching every student, is examined through the lens of the PoP, many potential problems emerge. First, school and school board leaders must identify if students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behavior are being sent home due to aggressive behaviour. If they are being sent home, is it as an informal or formal suspension? If students are being sent home, school and school board leaders need to consider how to track this information system-wide. Tracking of this information is important to the PoP as regulations regarding progressive discipline were released as *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145* (Ministry of Education, 2009). Further, *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 120* (Ministry of Education, 2011) dictates how and when violent incidents must be reported to the Ministry of Education. It is important to differentiate that the challenging behaviour displayed by students with Developmental Disabilities within the PoP is usually different than behaviours that the Ministry of Education mandates as suspensions and/or expulsions, and so the behaviour is not typically tracked. If school and school board leaders could track the consequences of challenging behaviour, including in-school or formal suspensions for students with Developmental Disabilities prior to

implementing any strategies, and track again after a strategy is implemented, it may help to determine the level of success for the strategy. While privacy may be a concern if this tracking were to occur, this information would only be relayed to the relevant superintendent and the appropriate staff in the Special Education Department. Tracking this information and follow up response is necessary within the broader professional expectation of “Integrity” (Ontario College of Teachers, n.d.). Within this standard of practice, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) identifies “continual reflection assists members in exercising integrity in their professional commitments and responsibilities” (Ontario College of Teachers, n.d.). If we, as a school board, understand that violent incidents are occurring, do we not have an obligation to determine if students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour are formally or informally being sent home? Once this is determined, is it not then our ethical responsibility to determine if staff who support these high needs students require more training and/or support? If this information could be tracked, OCDSB would be able to appropriately respond to any allegations of student violence in the classroom, especially as it pertains to the safety of staff and students. This would only further enhance “public trust and confidence in the teaching profession” (Ontario College of Teachers, n.d.).

When examining the second key assumption of the Structural Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) regarding the specialization and appropriate division of labour, OCDSB is hierarchically organized with clearly delineated job responsibilities. This hierarchical structure is necessary, especially in board administration as regulated by the Ministry of Education (i.e. supervisory officers) and various employee unions represented within the school board (e.g. CUPE) (Human Resources Administrator, personal communication, September 17, 2015). Although supervisory officer (superintendent) positions may not be flexible, examining this second assumption through the lens of the PoP, it appears inflexible unionized positions, specifically Educational Assistants

and Early Childhood Educators, may be adversely affecting coordination between units and individuals, Bolman and Deal's (2013) third assumption. First, union agreements prevent the assigning of a specific support worker to a specific student. Essentially, even though the student may work well with a specific staff member, seniority determines staff placement. Therefore, staff working in any position may change at specifically designated times throughout the school year. Changes may happen mid-year or at any time throughout the school year as positions become available or reduced. The reverse situation, in which skills of support personnel may not align with student-specific needs, may also emerge as seniority dictates potential movement between positions. These points indicate discord within Bolman and Deal's (2013) fourth assumption, as rationality is not able to prevail over external pressures. In this case, it would seem rational for staff to be placed with students where the fit is mutually beneficial. If all employees who are entitled to full-time employment receive a full-time position, seniority alone should not dictate where an employee is placed in the school system.

The fourth assumption relates to the fifth assumption, in which Bolman and Deal (2013) state that the structure will fit current circumstances. Union agreements may have better suited the school board structure when academic support was the primary responsibility of support staff, as changing support staff roles has meant assigning staff for intense medical and safety concerns. Since this resulted in changes to the organizational structure, the school board must consider if re-negotiation of these agreements may be necessary.

Bolman and Deal's (2013) sixth assumption of the Structural Frame acknowledges that trouble will arise and performance will suffer until problem solving and restructuring begins. This is evident within OCDSB as support staff assigned to students who exhibit challenging behaviour are reporting difficulties to school principals, school board administration, and union representatives. For example, although most permanent and occasional support staff have been

trained in behaviour support techniques (Human Resources Administrator, personal communication, March 22, 2017) some support staff continue to report feeling a lack of student-specific training prior to being assigned to support a student with special needs. Additionally, some support staff have reported little to no involvement in the development of behaviour plans and/or safety plans (Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015). These combined problems identify gaps that are preventing students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour from developing an increased sense of social belonging within their school community.

Human resources frame. Gaps can also be identified when school and school board leaders examine Bolman and Deal's (2013) Human Resources Frame. Centred on interactions between people and the organization, organizations progress when there is a good fit between the two.

The first key assumption states that organizations exist to serve the needs of the people. Reflecting upon the PoP, school and school board leaders can consider whether the school board, as an organization, is meeting the goal of increasing a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. The second assumption that people and organizations need one another, is also true in OCDSB. The students need the organization to receive an education, and school board staff need the organization as a source of employment. The organization requires students for enrolment as well as staff to support the students. However, the gap emerges within the third assumption, in which there appears to be a poor fit between the individual and the system. Strained relationships between the school board and its employees are evident, and employees feel disempowered. Some employees are no longer engaging in meaningful work, with the result that the organization is failing to meet the goal of providing support and increasing the sense of social belonging for students with

Developmental Disabilities. Increased staff absenteeism has been reported from principals, union representatives, and the Human Resource Department (Human Resources Manager, personal communication, October 1, 2015). This increased absenteeism means that student needs are not being met, Bolman and Deal's (2013) first assumption, but it is also reflective of their third assumption that indicates a poor fit between the organization and its people. To better understand why a poor fit may have evolved within this frame, Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs will be referenced as it allows for a deeper exploration of potential factors affecting employees.

Maslow (1943) presented a hierarchy in which he identified five primary human needs. He posited that a person who is lacking everything from their life will likely be most strongly driven by the desire for food. As the basic needs are met, people will advance through the hierarchy until achieving esteem which is situated at the apex of the pyramid. However, Maslow cautions readers that although pyramidal in nature, it is possible for some needs to simultaneously exist in multiple levels. The person however, will be driven by the level with the highest number of needs. This hierarchy is relevant to the Human Resources Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013), as some employees are unable to progress through these levels as they are not able to meet one of their own foundational needs.

Student cameos. When examining how school and school board leaders can increase a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour, these leaders must acknowledge the difficulty that arises in the last section of the PoP. Developing a sense of belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities is the goal, but more specifically, the PoP seeks to understand how to achieve this goal for students who exhibit challenging behaviour. Providing support for students with Developmental Disabilities is much different than providing support for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit

challenging behaviour. Pertinent to the Human Resources Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013), at this point of the OIP, I feel it is important to provide two cameos that reflect an amalgamation of some typically occurring behaviours concerning to staff members within OCDSB. First, to review the definition of challenging behaviour provided in Chapter One, it is defined as aggressive behaviour that results from anxiety, fear, or panic (Adapted from Marks & Marks, 2016, p. 118). In the cameos that follow, please note that no identifying characteristics of any student are included, they are a collation of behaviours that bear similarity to some students and the diversity of issues they present. This is not based on empirical data, but is intended for the reader to gain a deeper understanding of the behaviours that are presented on a regular basis.

Cameo 1: Tariq. An 8-year old girl with Autism, Tariq's verbal abilities have been identified by a speech-language pathologist in the normal range, which means that she is no longer eligible for active speech therapy. When frustrated, she lashes out at staff and swears, hits, spits, and kicks. She punches holes in walls and/or breaks any available classroom item. Staff have received follow-up medical care for injuries to their person due to her aggression.

Cameo 2: Francis. A 5-year old boy with a Developmental Disability, Francis is largely non-verbal. Visual symbols and schedules are used, supported with social stories, verbal prompting, and positive reinforcement throughout the day to assist him in following routines. At times, without warning, he will lash out at staff and bite them. No antecedent has yet been identified. This behaviour quickly escalates into a full-blown tantrum in which he throws himself to the floor, starts screaming, and flails his arms and legs in such a manner that staff are unable to move close to him. There are times when he must be restrained for safety, for example, when he is at risk of injuring himself due to head banging, and when staff intervene, it typically results in injury to staff, including bruising. Post-incident medical treatment for staff has not yet been required.

These two examples provide a snapshot of behaviors faced daily by Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, and teachers in many classrooms. Summarizing these behaviours may help readers empathize with school staff who may feel overwhelmed and unsure of their own safety, or that of the student who is in their care. Safety is a fundamental need as proposed by Maslow (1943), and school and school board leaders should consider how employees' feelings of lack of safety may potentially affect relationships between them and the students whom they support (Wilson, Douglas, & Lyon, 2011; Skåland, 2016). Additionally, school board leaders are encouraged to consider how feelings of lack of safety may adversely affect school staff in performing job requirements. When factors impacting employee and student well-being and safety are addressed, this will lead to a better fit within the organization, Bolman and Deal's (2013) fourth assumption, as school and school board staff can engage in meaningful and satisfying work, helping the organization to succeed.

Political frame and coalitions. The organization's success is largely dependent upon how school board leaders manage the Political Frame as presented by Bolman and Deal (2013). Their first assumption of this frame is "organizations are coalitions of different individuals and interest groups" (p. 188). Within OCDSB, there are four primary coalitions affecting the PoP. The first coalition is formed by parents of students with special needs, specifically Developmental Disabilities. Team and/or school meetings at OCDSB typically involve discussions regarding student placement. In relation to the meetings that I attend, many parents communicate the desire for their child to be integrated into classrooms with same-aged, typically developing peers. In order to help their child meet curriculum and/or alternative expectations, many of these same parents also advocate for one-to-one support of an Educational Assistant. However, some of these children have adaptive skills similar to those of their peers as they can independently toilet and perform self-care tasks and, therefore do not require one-to-one support being requested.

Instead, alternatives are provided, such as offering the support of a resource teacher for one or more periods each day. The resource teacher then works individually and/or in small groups to help each student reach his/her needs. Another alternative is the provision of Educational Assistant support when required by the student. School board leaders, reflecting on the current distribution of support within Bolman and Deal's (2013) frame may be able to determine the potential for the implementation of alternative distribution of staff support to help address concerns of parents who have children with special needs.

A second coalition has been formed by teachers requesting additional support in their classroom. Again, referencing my participation in school meetings, many teachers are requesting additional Educational Assistant support, not only for students with Developmental Disabilities, but to support the high number of other identifications, such as Learning Disabilities, in their classrooms. Out of all identified students in OCDSB with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), approximately 50% of these students have a diagnosed Learning Disability (Special Education Staff Member #1, personal communication, November 14, 2016). This number is an estimate taken from the school board tracking system, as students who have more than one disability are identified as multiple exceptionalities, which may include a Learning Disability. It is not possible with the current software to identify all disabilities included in the multiple exceptionality category. Classroom teachers must make accommodations and/or modifications to the curriculum for many students and thus many classroom teachers report feeling overwhelmed.

A third coalition is comprised of school principals, who, in consultation with their teaching staff, request additional Educational Assistant support. Within my consultant-type role within the Special Education Department, I have had conversations with school principals who have

requested this support for yard duty, break coverage for other school Educational Assistants, bus duty, lunch duty, and/or simply to provide an extra pair of hands when a student is in need.

The fourth and final coalition is comprised of school board administration and Special Education Department personnel who strive to provide the required support while meeting the Ministry of Education mandate to balance the school board budget. As discussed previously, historical inequities in funding continue to plague OCDSB, and although a common desire is to provide support when requested by schools, administration and Special Education staff must carefully consider the budget when allocating support.

Political frame and assumptions. When school board leaders reflect upon support allocation, it becomes apparent that each group is advocating on behalf of their own needs, reflecting Bolman and Deal's (2013) first assumption within the Political Frame. Each group represents different values and interests, and their differences in beliefs, information and perceptions impact their plea for assistance, Bolman and Deal's (2013) second assumption. However, Bolman and Deal's (2013) third assumption, and arguably the most important, is that decisions center upon the allocation of scarce resources. This is especially true for publicly-funded Ontario school boards as the Ministry of Education determines the funding to be provided to each school board. As mentioned in Chapter One, access to some of this funding, especially in relation to the support of students with special needs, has been less than equitable, and many school boards continue struggling to provide required supports. Therefore, while each coalition advocates for its own needs, there is, in fact, little opportunity for school board leaders to be flexible in terms of allocating financial support. However, school board leaders can continue to use Bolman and Deal's (2013) political frame to guide them in bringing forward parent, teacher, and principal concerns to the Ministry of Education regarding school board funding.

School board leaders can also reflect on Bolman and Deal's (2013) fourth assumption within the Political Frame, in which the fight for resources becomes the center of daily conflict making power the most important asset. Reflecting on how support is provided, school board leaders must consider if power plays a role in the distribution of any resources. For example, school board leaders can consider if a school is allocated additional support because school personnel were encouraged, perhaps from a superintendent or a union representative, to make their voices heard. They can question if additional support was provided to a student due to forceful parental involvement or if resources have been allocated fairly and equally across the school board. Leaders can also consider if there are additional ways to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources considering the perspectives of the various coalitions. Finally, school board leaders can reference Bolman and Deal's (2013) fifth assumption of the Political Frame in questioning how goals and decisions are made; do they emerge from the bargaining between stakeholders or is it a collaborative process?

Symbolic frame. Bolman and Deal's (2013) fourth frame, the Symbolic, encourages school and school board leaders to consider five assumptions. Stating, "what is most important is not what happens but what it means" (p. 248), school and school board leaders can begin to reflect upon common activities within OCDSB. Ryan (2006), further supports this line of thinking and encourages educators to "understand the ways in which students are excluded, the patterns that this process follows" (p. 6). Reflecting on this, school and school board leaders at OCDSB can determine if typical school practices may inadvertently be preventing a socially just environment (Ryan, 2006). Within this frame, leaders are encouraged to reflect upon the meaning behind the actions, for example being cognizant of how people with Developmental Disabilities are reflected in the everyday school environment. School and school board leaders may also examine student-specific programming, recognizing if students with Developmental

Disabilities are paired with typically developing peers during routine school jobs, such as milk delivery. In reflecting upon this matter, leaders can consider if the student's placement and/or job reinforces the stereotype that a job is only for a special needs student. Other considerations include awareness days, in which a disability is highlighted on a specific day. Leaders may consider how disabilities are represented throughout the school year, and if various disabilities are reflected throughout the school and classroom resources.

This latter example relates to the second assumption within the Symbolic Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013), in which events and actions have multiple interpretations as individuals have unique experiences in different situations. School and school board leaders are therefore encouraged to seek student and parental input on the representation of students with varying exceptionalities, ensuring that various disabilities are represented and discussed with dignity.

The third assumption (Bolman & Deal, 2013) indicates that symbols are created to resolve confusion, find direction, and anchor hope and faith. Within this assumption, school and school board leaders can question if symbols, created to assist people with disabilities, may be negatively impacting students with Developmental Disabilities.

The fourth assumption (Bolman & Deal, 2013), encourages school and school board leaders to reflect upon the final product of an event or process. For example, on Autism Awareness Day, are there opportunities for students to see the world through the perspective of a person with Autism? Do stories from people with disabilities wind their way into the classroom curriculum through the storytelling of individual experiences? How can school and school board leaders help to shape these experiences? This lends itself to the fifth and final assumption (Bolman & Deal, 2013) in which school and school board leaders examine how the culture of the organization bonds people within it together.

Maslow's Framework

Bolman and Deal's (2013) framework could be used in isolation by school and school board leaders to address potential factors impeding organizational change. However, it bears repeating that the PoP centers around developing a sense of social belonging for *students* with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour in OCDSB. With that in mind, it is not only beneficial, but imperative, to address factors that may be impacting student behaviour in relation to the PoP. Maslow's (1943) *Theory of Human Motivation* offers a framework that can assist school and school board leaders in identifying factors that may be negatively impacting students with Developmental Disabilities in OCDSB.

As with organizational change theory, there are other frameworks that could have been used, for example, Herzberg's (1968) Hygiene-Motivation Theory, which examines employee motivation or Marks and Marks' (2016) Conscious Classrooms framework that examines factors impacting student behaviour. However, Maslow's (1943) framework is the most applicable as it addresses basic human needs for both students and employees, and it begins with physiological needs. This is important because many children with Developmental Disabilities, especially those with Autism, have trouble with nutrition and gut health, with some harbouring high levels of bacteria in their system (Professional Development Speaker, personal communication, April 22, 2016; Autism Study, 20 May 2014). In many school meetings, parents indicate their child with Autism experiences problems with nutrition, gut health, insomnia, and/or hyper- or hypo-sensory concerns. These are also concerns of doctors and researchers around the globe (Autism Study, 20 May 2014). For that reason, it is important for school and school board leaders to address potential physiological concerns.

Below is Maslow's updated Hierarchy of Needs in pyramidal form (Conscious Aging Institute, 2016). It can be used by school and school board leaders to prompt parents and school

staff identify factors that may be impeding a student's ability to reach social needs.

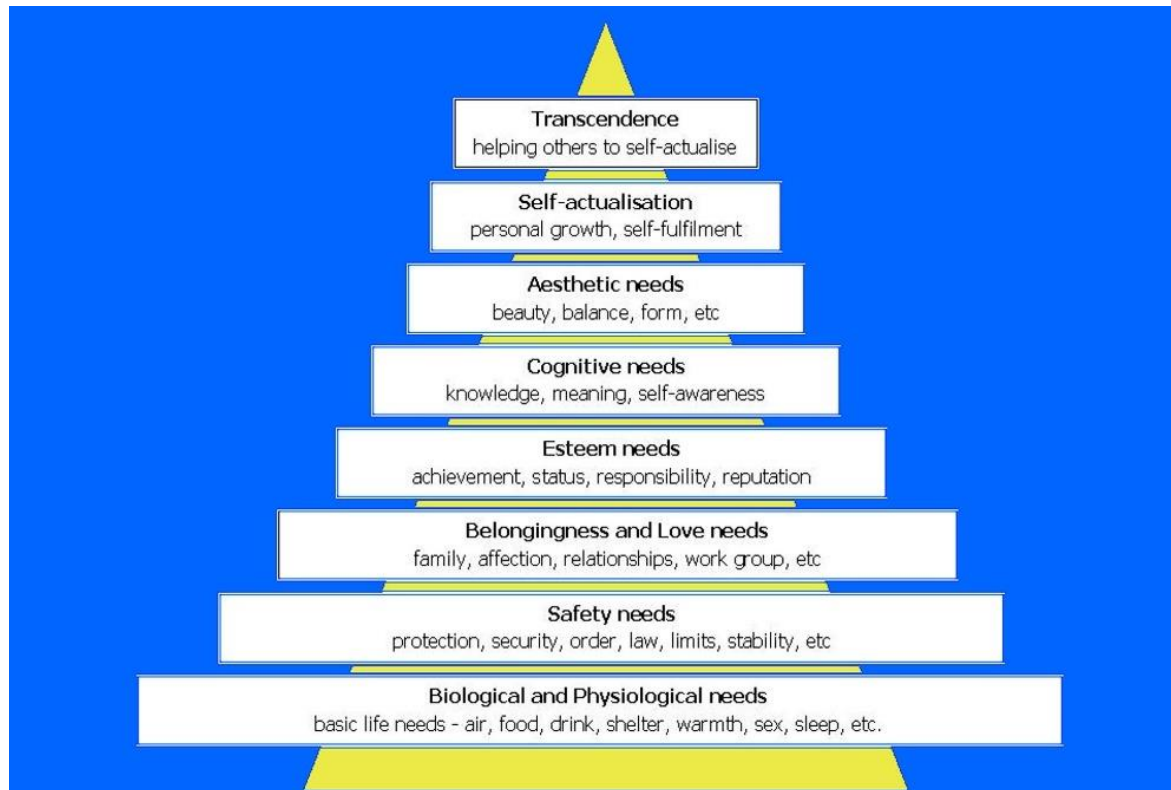


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Conscious Aging Institute, 2016).

In addition, earlier in this chapter I referenced the opportunity for school board leaders to refer to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy when addressing staff needs. If school board leaders incorporate this framework into the Human Resources Framework of Bolman and Deal (2013), it will enable school board leaders to understand factors that may be impacting employee performance. They can address any underlying physiological problems if the employee reveals concerns, but this framework can also lead to open conversations that discuss how a perceived lack of safety may be affecting job performance.

Maslow's (1943) framework can guide school and school board leaders in evaluating potential safety concerns for students with Developmental Disabilities. Maslow (1943) indicates children typically want a predictable day based on routine. This is especially true for students with Developmental Disabilities (Marks & Marks, 2016). Safety threats are often responded to

with undesirable behaviour (Maslow, 1943; Child Developmental Psychologist, personal communication, October 12, 2011). Armed with this information, school and school board leaders can encourage school staff to consider how a compromised feeling of safety may be adversely affecting student behaviour.

Maslow (1943) indicates that once most needs within one of his hierarchical levels is met, the individual progresses to the next hierarchical level. Therefore, if the physiological and safety needs of students and staff are met, the next level addresses issues that may be impacting the development of a sense of love and/or belonging, upon which the PoP is centred.

Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

Option One

Maintaining status quo would see OCDSB continuing current practices and policies. If this choice is adopted, no additional resources would be required as no change would be implemented. This choice would be concerning for a few reasons. First, OCDSB has been mandated by the Ministry of Education to balance the budget. Second, failure to address staff concerns about physically aggressive behaviour of students with Developmental Disabilities may lead to continued staff absenteeism (Skåland, 2016; Wilson et al., 2011) and further financial strain for the board. Third, if staff concerns are not addressed in a mutually acceptable manner, the positive relationships that have been developed between school board administration, school board staff, and staff unions may deteriorate (Deery et al., 2013). Fourth, if additional strategies are not put into place to support students with Developmental Disabilities who are part of the school community, these students will likely continue to be recognized by behaviour instead of being provided with the opportunity to develop caring relationships with other students and staff (Pitonyak, 2013; Marks & Marks, 2016). Finally, a reduced sense of safety will likely continue to exist amongst not only among staff, but also amongst the students (Wilson et al., 2011) who

share classrooms with students of all abilities. Fear and feelings of insecurity may continue to pervade the classroom environment, negatively impacting the school environment.

Option Two

This involves implementation of the suggested OIP with the exception of the staffing changes that may require negotiations with unions at the provincial level. If this were to occur, staff would continue to be placed by seniority which may not prove to be the best fit for the student or employee. However, if the other suggested changes within the OIP are implemented, it could help to address staff and union concerns while positively impacting the sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

To bridge the gap between current and future state, educational leaders can analyze factors impeding organizational change through the frameworks presented by Bolman and Deal (2013) and Maslow (1943). Bridging the gap will also require leaders to not only adopt these two frameworks, but to use these frameworks and a set of Professional Development Continuums as tools. Use of these tools will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames Model and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs can be used to evaluate student and staff needs and the impact of these on the development of a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. These frameworks can be used to address structural changes required to move from the current to future state. Concrete goals can be established, such as a reduction in staff absenteeism and a reduction in the number of violent incident reports.

Adopting these frameworks and tools will require no additional financial expenditures, but there will be a cost in terms of time required from school and school board personnel, for example, in terms of form development and review, and training in the use of these forms. If these frameworks are adopted, OCDSB will need to update practices currently in use by both

school and school board leaders. Templates could be developed specific to the needs at OCDSB, which would lead to uniform implementation of these frameworks across the school board. School board leaders would require time to develop these frameworks, working in consultation with school principals to ensure ease of implementation within regular school meetings. Use of these frameworks will be two-fold. First, templates could assist school board staff in identifying factors at the school board level that may be impeding change. Second, the templates could encourage school staff to consider factors that may be preventing students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour from developing a sense of social belonging within their school community. When this is used in conjunction with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs visual presented earlier in the chapter (Figure 1), staff will have a template to lead discussions with parents and/or agency representatives that identify potential factors that may be negatively impacting the student. These templates would then guide meetings, instead of becoming an "add on" for staff that already feel overwhelmed. A trade-off for use of these frameworks and potential templates would mean uniform implementation at all schools within OCDSB, potentially resulting in some staff feeling a reduced sense of autonomy. However, the primary benefit would ensure equal consideration of each child's needs.

Finally, the development of a long-range professional development plan would require dedicated planning and implementation time from OCDSB staff, necessitating continued use of distributed leadership, as leaders for this task will likely be comprised of employees across departmental levels of OCDSB. This would likely include representation from administration, the Special Education Department, Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators and/or representatives from employee unions. Considerations could include initiation and maintenance of job-embedded training (The Institute for Education Leadership, 2013; OCDSB, 2015; Sparks, 2015). Iverson (1996) also posits that two key components of successful organizational change

include employee involvement and the commitment of the organization to provide employee training. The completed professional development plan could identify strategies and goals, potential guest speakers, school board staff required for training, as well as resources and/or external consultants required to achieve the outlined goals. Establishing projected completion timelines would ensure timely implementation. Potential financial output, such as coverage for employee release time, could also be indicated in the plan to assist with long-term financial planning and resource allocation. This would naturally lead to the Human Resource Frame as presented by Bolman and Deal (2013) as board-wide communication and reflection would be necessary for successful implementation of the changes. The development of a team to plan implementation of this OIP will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Successful communication would also involve collaboration between departments, for example Human Resources and Special Education. While a trade-off may be reduced flexibility in terms of short-term planning, a percentage of annual professional development days could be left unscheduled to allow for presentation of topics that may be time-sensitive. The benefits for OCDSB will far outweigh the trade-offs as current scheduling for support staff professional development scheduling sometimes occurs days a few days before the event. Therefore, a clear, multi-year plan will provide not only desired objectives, but it will also provide the appropriate department(s) with enough notice to carefully consider professional development activities.

Further, a multi-year professional development plan will encourage commitment of OCDSB to a specific plan. Currently, the past three years has been witness to three separate non-compatible training programs for support staff. A multi-year plan would have the potential to reduce both employee time committed to professional development as well as financial expenditures for initiatives that may not be supported long-term.

Option Three

While this OIP could proceed with the aforementioned solutions, the third option would encompass all proposed elements of the OIP. This would include the ability of the school board to assign school support staff according to qualifications. However, current union regulations prevent this from happening, as support staff are assigned according to seniority. If this were to change, hiring and placement policies would have to be amended to reflect placement procedures for staff with additional qualifications. This would be a shift as employees may begin to set their professional goals to realize their desired position. For example, some employees may prefer working with students with Autism while others may prefer working with students with communication disorders. Training and additional courses would therefore be reflected in their choice for professional development. The trade-offs would be that staff, specifically senior staff, would no longer be guaranteed placement in their preferred position. This is also a benefit, as sometimes the most senior staff choose positions that are not a good fit for the student with whom they work. This would also require some re-structuring within the Human Resource Department as this would be a complete change in staffing policy.

However, the benefits would include the ability for school and school board leaders to place support staff where their skills are most required. Additionally, if support staff are encouraged to participate in professional development courses per their interests, understanding the potential for preferential placement, they may become more vested in working with students with specific exceptionalities. This would have an added benefit as there may be an expanded pool of staff with additional qualifications that could be assigned to students with complex needs. A consequence of this solution would entail negotiations with local unions, with the possibility of these discussions requiring negotiation at the provincial level.

Ideally, I would choose the latter option as it would allow for full implementation of this OIP, but would plan to begin with a pilot of two schools for the initial year to allow time to address any concerns that may arise. The following year would entail full implementation across the school board. I would not opt for the status quo, as this would not help to address the PoP. The second option, implementation of this OIP without union negotiations regarding staff placement would not be ideal. While much of the OIP could be implemented, failure to address a key problem in staff allocation would prevent OCDSB from achieving the full plan. Although negotiations may be required at a provincial level to ensure assignment of staff according to skills instead of seniority, recent funding developments have indicated that this type of negotiation is possible. Many boards came together to address inequitable funding for special education (Superintendent, personal communication, April 12, 2016; Peel District School Board, n.d.). If my board were to present staffing concerns in consultation with local unions, this type of change may be possible at the local level. Therefore, in review of these three potential scenarios, I would opt for full implementation of this OIP to comprehensively address any issues that may be affecting how school and school board leaders can develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

Leadership Approaches to Change

Numerous studies have revealed a complex and sophisticated process has emerged to define the term leadership (Northouse, 2016). Northouse acknowledges that while some researchers consider leadership to be a set of trait-based behaviours, others view it as the development of a relationship. Relationship development is an important component of this OIP, a trait reflected in both transformational and distributed leadership. While other leadership styles, such as servant leadership and authentic leadership may be applicable for this OIP, transformational leadership best supports the OIP as it sets a vision, and motivates followers to

strive towards a common goal, while distributed leadership importantly addresses practical implications of implementing the change plan. For these reasons, I have chosen transformational leadership and distributed leadership as frameworks for addressing the PoP.

Examining the PoP through the lens of transformational leadership will address how to change perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. While this change could be achieved through alternative leadership theories, it is important to reflect on the pros and cons of some of these theories. For example, servant leadership theory, as proposed by Greenleaf (1977), “begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*” (p. 22). Servant leaders are ethical and ensure that the needs of others are met before their own (Northouse, 2016). This type of leadership addresses the PoP, as its foundation is to serve others. Servant leaders are encouraged to question if they are helping others to grow while being served (Greenleaf, 1977). However, servant leaders are encouraged to consider if those who are least privileged will benefit, or “at least not be further deprived” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 22). This is an important qualifier, especially as it pertains to this PoP, as Ryan and Tuters (2014) and Ryan (2006) indicate that students with disabilities and their families are often marginalized. Bearing this in mind, the students referenced within the PoP are students with disabilities. Within this OIP, the minimum expectation is not simply that students not be further deprived. Instead, this OIP seeks to change how school and school board leaders respond to the specific circumstances of each student.

Another leadership theory, authentic leadership, “focuses on whether leadership is genuine and “real”” (Northouse, 2016, p. 227). This theory, in the relatively early stages of development, indicates that authentic leadership is focused on the behaviour of leaders, and includes “their moral character, values, and programs” (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 184). George (2014) notes the importance of staying true to yourself and your beliefs, recommending that leaders talk about

the plan and explain its importance; in doing so, he also recommends aligning oneself with others who share these same beliefs. Gardner and Carlson (2015), expand upon this idea, positing that authentic leaders and their followers who uphold their beliefs and thoughts develop positive relationships that further impact job satisfaction and performance. While important to this OIP, relationship development is better addressed through transformational and distributed leadership as it is based on collaborative efforts of all involved. Additionally, it is important that change leaders of this OIP do more than stay true to the vision; it requires leaders to encourage other employees to change their perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour, a goal best met through transformational leadership. Therefore, a blend of transformational leadership and distributed leadership offers the greatest potential for organizational change.

Schein (2010) posits that transformational leaders may lead cultural change within organizations, but notes for this to occur, information regarding the intent of the change must be clearly communicated. Therefore, school board administration at OCDSB must clearly communicate intended change goals to employees referencing that support will be provided from school and school board staff. The existing culture at OCDSB can help to achieve the change required within the PoP as OCDSB is committed to providing an inclusive education for students regardless of ability. Schein (2010) acknowledges that cultural changes often result from organizational change; this is important to the OIP as it seeks to change OCDSB culture by transforming perceptions, changing current practices, and developing a collective vision. Many authors such as Carter et al. (2014), Bass et al. (2001), Griffith (2004), Smith and Bell (2011), and Carter et al., (2013), indicate that transformational leadership centres on the ability to develop and attain a collective vision. Transforming perceptions is an important component of the PoP that seeks to change employee perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities

who exhibit challenging behaviour. Employee input is an important part of this process as Schein (2010) indicates transformative change “implies that the person or group that is the target of change must *unlearn* something as well as learn something new” (p. 301). Therefore, school and school board leaders will be faced with changing perceptions of why students with Developmental Disabilities are perceived as being deliberately aggressive, with a discussion that helps to re-frame potential factors that may be impacting student behaviour.

It will be necessary that discussions regarding student behaviour be framed by components of distributed leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Harris, 2005b). Initially, guidance will be provided by school and school board leaders beginning with administration, and then flow to school teams through principals and school staff (Harris, 2005b) with assistance from Special Education Department staff. Schein (2010) admits this will pose a challenge as our learning has become embedded in our everyday routines. However, transformational leaders encourage employees to think outside the realm of traditional practice and challenge traditional ways of thinking. When supported by leaders who emphasize the importance of natural and authentic methods of distributing leadership tasks, careful planning emerges which supports goal achievement (Harris, 2014). Selecting change leaders should occur based on strengths and interests, for example, ensuring individuals have either a profound interest (Cawsey et al., 2016) and/or experience with students with special needs.

To understand potential resistance to change, transformational leaders must begin with their vision; that of changing staff perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Carter et al. (2013) posit transformational leadership can act as a change antecedent that “...facilitates the development of quality relationships between leaders and their employees” (p. 943). This is a critical consideration within the context of my PoP, as current relationships between employees and school board administration, while strained, in part,

due to union influence, are still predominantly positive; likewise, positive relationships exist between employee unions and school board administration. School board administration is in regular communication with both board employees and union representatives when problems arise. However, OCDSB is experiencing a new crossroads. Union representatives are encouraging their employees to fill out violent incident reports for any incident, regardless of severity (Resource Teacher, personal communication, April 26, 2017), and this is negatively impacting the relationship between administration and union personnel. The union is also requesting that additional educational assistants are hired by the board to support the growing needs of students who are exhibiting challenging behaviour (Joint Health & Safety Committee Meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015). However, this does not solve the underlying problem of why staff report feeling unsafe at work. How school board leaders respond to the concerns about employee safety may easily sway how this relationship unfolds.

School board leaders can reference OCDSB's commitment to an inclusive education, acknowledging employee and union concern. The key here is how leaders begin to change the mindset of employees; no longer should students be perceived as behaviour problems; instead, they should be considered as students who are struggling to find a sense of social belonging in environments that are not always arranged to help them succeed. Transformational leaders could begin introducing this collective vision by involving employees in developing the change vision. Additionally, distributed leadership will necessitate collaboration and relationship development, encouraging employees to become active participants in developing frameworks and/or problem solving to achieve established goals. Acknowledging their role within the organization can affect positive change (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Harris, 2005b; Carter et al., 2013).

It will be important for school and school board leaders to indicate that this change will be incremental in nature, indicating that sweeping changes will not be introduced across the board.

Instead, change will be thoughtful and considered, an ongoing and reflective process, beginning with implementation in two pilot schools. This can be communicated as leaders reference the development of a long-range professional development plan, asking for employee input into its development, an element of distributed leadership. This is especially critical for those employees that work on a one-to-one basis with students who exhibit challenging behaviour. Not only will their input provide school board administration with direction regarding employees' needs, it will further reinforce the effort at relationship-building, and building capacity as informal leadership is equally important (Harris, 2014) to this OIP, especially considering the number of employees that work one-to-one with a student with a Developmental Disability who exhibits challenging behaviour. Their attitude and input can greatly affect the potential for change (Price, 2013).

This is a crucial component of both transformational and distributed leadership, as employees who are encouraged to provide input into change processes makes it more likely that they will develop a positive attitude toward the change, becoming personally vested in achieving the change plan (Carter et al., 2013). There will be additional benefits as employees will see the commitment to their professional development as a carefully considered long-term plan, observing the school board's vested interest in addressing their concerns. Also, if Bolman and Deal's (2013) and Maslow's (1943) frameworks are adopted and a long-term plan is realized, it will chart a course for organizational change, specifically supporting school leaders in the change plan, leaving little room for personal interpretation in how the change process should unfold. This clear change plan is necessary because if there is any variation on the change process, it could lead to confusion and increase emotional tension (Carter et al., 2013). An added benefit of a clearly organized change plan will likely be reduced fiscal expenditures as a long-term plan

will ensure a commitment to securing any needed resources in advance (human and/or material), after considering how the resource(s) will support the change plan.

Explaining use of the frameworks and the development of a long-range professional development plan will assure employees of the longevity of this change initiative, a point which Carter et al. (2013) identify is necessary for employees to think critically about the change and realize the active role they can play in the change process. Although Carter et al. (2013) were referring to business leaders, their observations can be applied to the educational sector. For example, school leaders will be able to implement the changes within their respective organizations (schools), encouraging ongoing conversations with all school employees. This will allow school leaders to immediately address any concerns as they arise, providing further assurance to employees that they have the support of administration, in this case, school and school board leaders.

Connections based on emotions and values help transformational leaders to inspire and motivate those around them, encouraging others to strive for more than what may be typically expected (Northouse, 2016; Smith & Bell, 2011). In fact, Smith and Bell's (2011) study revealed that transformational leadership was used by school leaders to enhance and develop the school and its employees. The role of school principal was key in this change process, as the authors identified that principals were vision-driven, acting with the intent to bring about long-term change based on collaboration and involvement with others. While transformational leadership was a key factor in Smith and Bell's (2011) study, and indeed supports this OIP, principal involvement involves application of distributed leadership traits, especially as principals are key to plan implementation.

Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) have also identified the importance of the school principal in effecting organizational change. They distinguished seven claims about successful

school leadership, including “school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning” (p. 27). The positive impact of school leadership on pupil learning is also supported by Griffith’s (2004) study. This sentiment was also referenced in the opening pages of the Ontario Leadership Framework (The Institute for Education Leadership, 2013), and the reference encourages school and school board leaders to consider their role in impacting student learning across the province.

This provides additional support that both transformational and distributed models of leadership are best suited to this OIP. Transformational leaders, as noted by Smith and Bell (2011), demonstrate “qualities such as optimism, excitement about goals, a belief in a future vision, and a commitment to develop and mentor followers and an intention to attend to their individual needs” (p. 59). Given that some employees are experiencing a reduced sense of safety in their school environment, transformational leaders can attend to their individual needs by addressing staff concerns through Bolman and Deal’s (2013) Four Frames Model and Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. When transformational leaders use these frameworks to address employee concerns, it will indicate their commitment to attend to employee needs. School board leaders can initiate this change, and supported through distributed leadership, can extend this through school leaders. When transformational and distributed leadership practices intersect, employees will bear witness to the commitment of the board to acknowledge their concerns while seeking a collaborative solution.

Conclusion

The concept of collaboration between the multiple stakeholders in a student’s life is central to this OIP and was explored in this chapter. The frameworks of Bolman and Deal (2013) and Maslow (1943) were used to identify factors that affect how school and school board leaders can help to develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who

exhibit challenging behaviour. Collaboration between everyone on the student's team is required, and this collaboration involves components of both distributed and transformational leadership.

Potential solutions were explored and they included designing templates to guide school meetings and establishing a long-range professional development plan. The suggested tasks impart a commitment to an organizational vision that addresses both student and employee needs. Three potential solutions to the PoP, including full, partial, or no implementation of the OIP were offered in this chapter, including barriers that may impact full or partial implementation.

Overall, full implementation of this OIP is recommended, as it would include a collaborative effort between organizational leaders, reflecting key components of transformational and distributed leadership. This collaborative effort will help to initiate the organizational changes required for achieving the OIP goals.

Collaboration, a key component of distributed leadership, will be outlined further in Chapter Three. Additionally, Chapter Three will address how to proceed with organizational change as recommended in this OIP, examined through the lens of both distributed and transformational leadership. Chapter Three will also expand upon Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), outlining how these models can be used to understand factors that may be affecting the PoP. Three potential solutions for the PoP will be discussed.

Chapter Three: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

Introduction

Many complex factors must be considered when undertaking organizational change. Chapter Three will discuss the importance of clearly communicating the change plan to employees in order for full implementation to occur, explaining how the change plan fits within the organizational strategy. At OCDSB, this means that school board leaders must first communicate the Strategic Direction of “Supportive Environments and Well-Being” (OCDSB, 2015) within the MYSP to all employees. Next, school board leaders must clearly identify how the PoP, specifically how school and school board leaders can help to develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour, relates to the MYSP. Finally, school board leaders must relay that they will be assisting all employees in achieving this organizational goal, outlining the change plan. When employees understand this change, and are informed that their input into the change plan is not only welcome, but expected, it will show that OCDSB respects its employees and is committed to planned organizational change.

Organizational commitment to an inclusive environment is critical (Ryan, 2016). He notes activism can be “challenging for school leaders” (p. 90), leading them to become marginalized themselves. However, OCDSB is already striving to become more inclusive while providing the supports necessary for each child, and so becoming an active champion of further inclusion should not be a cause for concern for either school or school board leaders.

Specific tools will be developed based on the frameworks of Bolman and Deal (2013) and Maslow (1943), supported by transformational and distributed leadership approaches. Additionally, a set of previously created Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012) will be presented that encourage staff at the school and school board level to

reflect upon issues related to accessibility and inclusion. The Change Plan that outlines objectives, timelines, communication methods, audience, and responsibilities will also be presented. Limitations of the tools will be discussed. Adopting these tools will help to ensure a more equitable manner of addressing the social needs of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. This supports Ryan's (2006) expectation that school communities become more socially just and equitable for all students.

Change Implementation Plan

This OIP is multi-faceted; the plan is designed to increase a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities. It also seeks to understand the complex factors that impact the organization when undertaking such change. This change plan fits within the context of the overall organizational strategy as it directly aligns with OCDSB's (2015) Strategic Direction of "Supportive Environments and Well-Being". Within this Strategic Direction, OCDSB identifies the desire to "work together to make our schools and work sites safe and welcoming places of equity, inclusion, and diversity" (OCDSB, 2015, p. 4). This OIP endeavors to improve the situation not only for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behavior, but also for school board employees, specifically Educational Assistants, who provide daily support.

The strategy for change is three-fold. First, school board administration are encouraged to use Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model as a change readiness tool to systematically review factors that may be positively or negatively impacting the ability of the organization to begin the change process. This model can assist school board leaders in considering the PoP from multiple perspectives based on key assumptions as outlined within each frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

The second stage for implementation utilizes Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs to assist school leaders in identifying barriers that may be preventing a student from developing a sense of social belonging within his/her school community. As this school-level tool has not yet been developed, it is recommended that a committee be created, including school board leaders, to develop any templates that will be used to guide school meetings. Committee development will be discussed later in this chapter. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy can also be used to supplement the Change Readiness Tool (Bolman & Deal, 2013), specifically in reference to safety concerns, as it supports further understanding of factors that may be impacting staff. These concerns are outlined in Bolman and Deal's (2013) Human Resources Frame.

The third stage involves the use of Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012) within individual schools. These continuums are designed to encourage reflection and increase school board capacity in issues related to accessibility and inclusion. Within the continuums are several questions for school teams to consider, and they provide topics that encourage reflection on student perceptions as well as the classroom and school environment. The questions are framed in a manner that promotes discussion amongst school staff, leading them to determine what factors may be changed and/or addressed within their own school environment. They are site-specific questions, addressing topics such as classroom climate, self-advocacy, and school and/or classroom resources. Each school will more than likely score differently across the continuums; the key is the dialogue that emerges when discussing accessibility and inclusion in their respective schools.

This tool also supports Bolman and Deal's (2013) Symbolic Frame as educational leaders will be encouraged to identify and reflect upon current representation of individuals with Developmental Disabilities within our school communities. Below is Table 2. It reflects how the priorities outlined in this OIP can be aligned with the MYSP. OCDSB's (2015) current

framework, delineated with the current headings, has been used within the school board's current categories. The MYSP is used by school board administration to outline and further develop key strategic directions for the board. Responsibility for goals will be outlined in Table 3, the Change Plan, on page 100.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Table 2

*Multi-Year Strategic Plan based on Organizational Improvement Plan Goals
(Adapted from current MYSP at OCDSB)*

<i>Tool</i>	<i>Our goal is to:</i>	<i>To achieve this success, we will:</i>	<i>Resource(s) required:</i>	<i>To assess our progress, we will:</i>
Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames Model	<u>Structural Frame</u>			
	Address employee concerns regarding challenging behaviour exhibited by students with Developmental Disabilities	Collaborate with employees and their respective unions to address safety concerns	Time (human resources) Financial (budget for professional development speakers/resources/training)	Monthly meetings with employee unions to ensure employee concerns are being addressed
	Develop a long-range professional development plan	Collaborate with employees and unions to identify areas of need for professional development		Create a long-range professional development plan within the first 6 months of beginning the OIP
	<u>Human Resources Frame</u>			
	Increase team collaboration, especially for safety and/or behaviour plans	Invite all involved employees to attend meetings for safety and/or behaviour plans, case conferences	Financial (e.g. supply staff coverage or remuneration for support staff attendance at meeting outside of regular work hours)	Principals will monitor to ensure employees have the opportunity for input on safety and/or behaviour plans
	Address staff concerns regarding student-specific	Ensure all staff who work with a student have been trained in	Time (human resources)	Monthly monitoring of employee attendance as

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

training (relate to Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs)	appropriate practice (e.g. Behaviour Management Systems Training, Crisis Prevention Intervention)	it relates to student violence
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Decrease staff absenteeism, leading to a reduction in financial expenditures and unstable support for DD students	Collaborate with employees and their unions when work time is lost work due to violent incident
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Political Frame

Develop a method to determine allocation of support staff (Educational Assistants)	Collaborate with principals, administration, and special education staff	Time (Human Resources)	Develop a resource to guide in assigning additional support
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Consider negotiations with unions at a provincial level to consider creating skill-specific positions (Educational Assistants)	Begin dialogue with local and provincial unions	Time (Human Resources) Financial (may require travel to meet with provincial unions, other school boards)	Meet quarterly to determine progress regarding employee positions within union
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Consider bringing forward inequitable funding for students with special needs as special education claim amounts require extremely intensive support, but only fund approximately 75% of the annual salary for one Educational Assistant	Begin dialogue with other school boards within our geographic region to determine plausibility of bringing forward concerns from a collective regional level		Meet quarterly with administration to discuss progress in regional collaboration; plan next steps if regional collaboration is agreed upon
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ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Symbolic Frame

	Identify how people with Developmental Disabilities are reflected in everyday school environments	Reference Professional Development Continuums in staff meetings	Time (human resources at staff meetings and to examine the school environment)	Monitor each school's progress along the Professional Development Continuums
	Identify how students with Developmental Disabilities reflected within student-specific programming (e.g. school jobs)	Examine IEPs for programming that reflects inclusion when possible	Time (e.g. collaborate with community agencies when developing inclusive IEP goals)	Examine IEPs during review periods for additional areas of inclusion
Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs	Understand barriers that may be preventing students with Developmental Disabilities from developing a sense of social belonging	Develop one or more templates to guide school meetings	Time (staff to develop templates, surveys)	Reconvene after one term to review feedback from pilot schools
			Potential cost (supply staff coverage)	Develop an online survey for school staff to provide feedback about the form(s)
Professional Development Continuums (2012)	Ensure all students are recognized and reflected in the curriculum and the larger school community	Review the Professional Development Continuums at the administrative level, passing on key information to school principals School principals will review these continuums	Time (for administration to review continuums)	Individual schools will self-monitor by discussing in divisions (primary, junior, intermediate) and report at staff meetings at least 3 times yearly
	Consider how "awareness days" are celebrated throughout the school year		Time (for staff to review continuums at staff meetings) Financial (e.g. potential purchase of resources, to secure guest speakers)	

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Pair students with Developmental Disabilities with typically developing peers during school events or tasks such as milk delivery	at monthly staff meetings, with divisional reviews scheduled throughout the year
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ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This model incorporates the work of Bolman and Deal (2013), Maslow (1943), and the Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012), as they work together to best address the goals of this OIP. The PoP is a complex problem that affects not only students but also employees. Bolman and Deal (2013) provide four lenses that encourage examination of key assumptions and have helped me to understand the challenges facing my organization as it relates to developing a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Higgs and Rowland (2005) posit that organizational leaders cannot approach change through a one size fits all approach; instead, while the goal must remain central to the change initiative, the process must become fluid, adapted to the various conditions within each organization. Westersund (2017) agrees, and encourages leaders to recognize that organizations are full of dynamic people and the context in which they work is constantly changing. Due to the fluidity and complexity of my organization, these three tools comprehensively assess the factors that may be impacting organizational change.

The Importance of Relationships

In some ways, publicly-funded school boards in Ontario are no different than corporate organizations as they are complex places full of dynamic players. The hierarchical structure affects the relationships between players, impacting how organizational change may be stymied or encouraged. Since this OIP revolves around the involvement of many key players, it is necessary that this be addressed and considered as the plan moves forward. This is important as union representatives and school staff are bringing forward concerns about student aggression and the impact on employee safety. This has necessitated the involvement of many people, including staff from the Special Education Department, School Board Administration, Union Representatives, school staff, and community agencies (Joint Health & Safety Committee

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015). At this Joint Health and Safety Committee meeting, superintendents indicated that a collegial and cooperative relationship currently exists between these key players (personal communication, October 1, 2015), and given the serious nature of the PoP within this OIP, school board leaders have a significant opportunity to further strengthen these relationships.

Relationships are an important component of both transformational and distributed leadership (Carter et al., 2013; Harris & Spillane, 2008) and maintaining relationships between employee unions and the school board is critical as they work together to address employee concerns and discuss potential solutions. Deery, Iverson, Buttigieg, and Zatzick (2013), in their study of unionized employees from an international banking organization in Australia, are supportive of union involvement in organizations. They argue that union citizenship behaviour (UCB), “a set of positive behaviours that are discretionary and noncontractual”, can have positive effects within the workplace as it provides a collective voice for the members (p. 211). They note that a collective voice, provided by the union, ensures that concerns are brought forward to organizational leaders. This offers the opportunity for communication to occur that can resolve disputes and reduce absenteeism and/or quitting (Deery et al., 2013). However, Deery et al. (2013) also warn there may be additional reasons for increased absenteeism, such as the negotiation of higher sick-leave benefits, that may be outside the control of the organization. This is a factor that has impacted OCDSB, as collective agreements have secured a significant number of sick days for all employees, and this may be a factor affecting employee attendance (Superintendent #1, personal communication, April 18, 2017). Nevertheless, Deery et al. (2013) support the idea that the union’s collective voice can positively influence relationships with organizational leaders.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The findings of Deery et al. (2013) critically support this OIP as good working relationships are already established between employee unions and OCDSB, and the collective voice of the employees is currently brought forward to administration from union representatives. Therefore, these strong relationships can serve as the foundation for implementing recommended changes if the organizational change is approached from a collaborative point of view. This is important, as staff absenteeism is not only a financial concern, but a support concern, as employee absence is likely negatively impacting the challenging students we seek to support. Therefore, discussions regarding the monitoring of employee attendance in relation to student violence must be very carefully formed, ensuring that any measures are not punitive in manner, but instead are designed to identify any additional supports required. This conversation must also be proactive in nature, providing information about the type of supports that the employee may be able to access from OCDSB, their employee union, and/or community partners. Therefore, the relationship between union representatives and OCDSB is key, as the union can communicate supports that the employees may feel are required when absenteeism is due to fear of personal injury and/or job-related stress. The role of the union is important as it not only informs organizational leaders about problems, but it can help to re-establish trust between employees and the school board, specifically those who may have been injured when working with a challenging student.

Key to re-establishing trust between employees and the school board is employee participation in the development of student behaviour and/or safety plans. All employees who work with the student must sign off on behaviour and/or safety plans. Distributed leadership (Harris, 2014; Harris, 2005b) will ensure that either the school principal or Special Education Department team member assigned to the student monitors employee participation in the

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

development and/or revision of these plans. Employees will be expected to communicate directly with their principal if they are unintentionally missed.

Zatzick and Iverson (2011) assert that employee involvement is a critical component of organizational success. Since employee unions at OCDSB are reporting support staff, specifically Educational Assistants, are feeling disempowered due to lack of involvement in plan development, this is an area in which school board staff must pay close attention. Regular meetings, such as Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings, are opportunities where school board staff and union representatives can monitor the change plan and ensure employee participation in behaviour and/or safety plans. While this committee could potentially serve as a platform to initiate the change plan, it would be beneficial to consider developing an independent committee that is reflective of specific goals within the proposed organizational change.

Committee Development

The development of a new committee may help to alter the perception of this change plan as participants will be involved due to their desire to collectively approach the PoP through the lens of improving social belonging for our most vulnerable students. As a student-framed issue, the committee will address problems and potential solutions designed to help employees support these at-risk youth. Ideally, there should be representation across levels (Cawsey et al., 2016; Stanleigh, n.d.; Westersund, 2017) of OCDSB, reflective of distributed leadership (Harris, 2005b; Harris, 2014; Harris & Spillane, 2008). This would include union representation from both teacher and Educational Assistant unions, as they are the collective voice of school board employees, as well as representation from school board administration, including a superintendent and a representative of Human Resources. Participation of the latter individuals will ensure the opportunity to address any administration concerns and to provide guidance for

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

any questions regarding the Safe Schools Act (Ministry of Education, 2000). The Human Resources representative will be able to advise on any questions related to job descriptions and provide general information on staff absenteeism and reports of student violence. The committee must also recommend methods for tracking student violence against school staff in relation to those students diagnosed with a Developmental Disability. Currently, a student's diagnosis may preclude a formal suspension under the Safe Schools Act due to mitigating circumstances (Ministry of Education, 2000). For this reason, a tracking method is required, as in order to provide services specific to the student and school staff, it is important that school and school board leaders be aware of the frequency and nature of the violent incidents.

To oversee the feasibility of incorporating the change plan, it would be advantageous for at least one school principal and one resource teacher to be involved. At least one member of the Special Education Department should be involved in this process, and a member of the Information Technology Department should initially be involved to assist in developing online tracking procedures. A representative from the Curriculum Department could provide curricular input as many of these students follow the Ontario curriculum but work towards modified curriculum goals.

It will be necessary for this team to agree upon a timeline for unrolling the change plan. Initially, it is recommended that one or two schools be chosen for implementation of this change plan, preferably upon recommendation by the school principal. It will be important to start small to allow for any required changes in the plan to be addressed before the plan is fully implemented. Due to the initial increased workload, weekly meetings are anticipated to develop resources, templates, and tracking and/or monitoring methods.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

To determine the effectiveness of any strategy, it is important to consider pre- and post-data collection. Initially, this team would gather absenteeism rates of both teaching and support staff and correlate these numbers with the violent incidents occurring in the target schools. Data is currently being collected, but it is neither collated nor captured by any individual or department, making the data unusable as it currently stands. This is a key reason for selecting a limited number of schools to start. Developing a method to uniformly collect and track data is essential to evaluating the success of any change plan (Westersund, 2017). Currently, a few identified individuals receive copies of violent incident forms. Another department monitors employee absences, while yet another group monitors employee concerns. Collating this data and assigning a committee to review this information will provide the opportunity to review this OIP-specific data.

Information tracking processes must be user-friendly, designed for ease of use by school principals who initially track the incident and then forward to the committee for review. The Special Education Department should also receive a copy, but the team will need to determine to whom this information will be directed. For example, it is recommended that both a superintendent and the head of the Special Education Department be involved in this data review as the superintendent would have regular communication with union representatives, and the Special Education Department would have student-specific knowledge to assist in program planning and provision of additional supports.

Therefore, initial plan development would be heavily weighted upon time and human resources, and school board administration would have to approve extra financial costs if release time requires supply coverage. Additionally, the Information Technology Department would be responsible for ensuring the capacity to develop, train, and implement personnel on web-based

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

data collection. Except for the Information Technology Department, the other departments are already involved, but involvement is often sporadic and not connected, and interconnectedness is a key component of this OIP.

It is important that the Information Technology Department buy into this change plan as they are an integral part of operations at OCDSB, and they provide direct and indirect services to many of these students. The technological support they can offer will help to bring this plan to fruition. It is hoped by connecting, that supports can then be more tailored to the individual student and/or staff member, which will result in greater inter-departmental communication and lead to support that is more strategically directed.

Long-Range Planning

This OIP also recommends the development of a long-range professional development plan for Educational Assistants. Development of a successful long range plan will require careful consideration of the topics to be addressed over the next five years. Short, medium, and long-term goals (Westersund, 2017; Cawsey et al., 2016), determined in conjunction with school board administration and union representatives, must be established when developing this professional development plan. Employee input is also central to encouraging buy-in to this plan and the change process (Harris, 2014; Cawsey et al., 2016). This involvement in the change plan across levels is further reflective of distributed leadership practices (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Harris, 2014; Harris, 2005b). Employees can be offered the opportunity to provide suggestions regarding professional development topics through online surveys and/or their union representatives. Once topics are determined, estimates can be developed that account for guest speaker fees and the cost of potential training for board staff, including situations such as “train the trainer”, another form of distributed leadership, when one or more school board staff are sent

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

to become trainers for the school board. Accommodations and meals for guests, meals for professional development days, and purchase of any required resources and/or photocopying of resources must also be considered.

Implementation Challenges

Some potential implementation challenges include staff changes and failure to follow through on all aspects of the plan. Changes in human resources affect any organization. Some reasons for change may include maternity and/or parental leave, extended sick leave, sabbatical leave, a change in position within the board, or a change in place of employment. Another consideration is that employees may be seconded to another institution (e.g., school board staff may be temporarily re-assigned to a position with the Ministry of Education for 1-2 years with the intent of returning to his/her school board at the end of secondment). Many of these changes are not under the control of the school board.

It is necessary for all involved to be committed to the plan, with the intent to maintain their involvement over approximately 18 to 24 months. It is recommended that a committee lead be identified to monitor any potential changes in personnel. This will allow the team to develop and maintain consistency in their approach. If staff changes are required, it will be necessary that those entering the plan mid-way would have an equal commitment to the task. The timeline to full school board implementation of the OIP is approximately two years.

Another implementation issue includes developing a clear process for reporting injury to staff. The team will need to develop a process to determine whether or not established protocols were followed when an injury to staff or student occurs. A final consideration that could affect plan implementation is if OCDSB decides not to implement one or more of the recommendations

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

in this OIP. However, as this plan is only a set of recommendations, failure to adopt one or more of the recommendations is at the sole discretion of the school board.

Timeline Development

If the plan is adopted in its entirety, it will be necessary for the team, as outlined in “Committee Development”, to devise a timeline for implementation. Short-, medium-, and long-term goals will be implemented throughout the first year. To begin, short-term goals would include the development of a team responsible for implementing this OIP and the selection of one or two schools to pilot this plan. Additional short-term goals would include the development of any necessary resources such as an online data collection system for violent incidents as well as a method for monitoring employee attendance in relation to student violence. Templates to be used in guiding school-based meetings would also be developed during this initial time frame. When working within the school calendar, a timeline of three months would be allocated to address these goals.

The next three months would involve the development of a long-range professional development plan. Tracking of violent incidents and employee absences in relation to student violence would begin. Confirmation of required resources and personnel for professional development days for the remainder of the current school year and upcoming school year would also be planned. The final four months would involve a review of developed templates, as well as the method for monitoring violent incidents and employee absenteeism in relation to student violence.

Limitations

It is equally important to address the limitations of this plan. Three significant limitations exist. First, the project is limited in scope, as it is designed specifically for students with

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Second, financial limitations are present as OCDSB is funded through the Ministry of Education and funding is non-negotiable. Third, staff attitudes may positively or negatively impact this project.

As it pertains to scope, this OIP is specifically designed to investigate how school and school board leaders can help to develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. This plan is designed to focus exclusively on this group of students as the experiences of a student with another exceptionality such as a physical disability or a Learning Disability are vastly different from a student with a Developmental Disability in which all areas of life and learning are affected.

A second limitation revolves around financial constraints as publicly-funded school boards in Ontario have budgets prescribed by the Ministry of Education. The school board may have to re-allocate financial resources to provide release time for school and school board staff and to secure external individuals for professional development presentations, training, and/or resources.

The third significant limitation involves the potential impact of staff attitudes. This is important because these attitudes have the potential to positively or negatively impact plan implementation. Dweck (2006) refers to this concept as fixed or growth mindset, identifying that an individual's mindset is directly related to his/her potential openness to change. If school and/or school board staff are unsupportive and refuse to buy in to the proposed changes, success of the OIP may be limited. Addressing this potential limitation will require the coordination of key stakeholders, including school board staff and union representatives. For this reason, planning to speak to staff mindset (Dweck, 2006) could be addressed within the long-range professional development plan. As well, for initial implementation, it would be advantageous for

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

a principal to volunteer his/her school based on communication with employees who are in support of the proposed changes.

Reflecting on how to secure ongoing support, leaders may want to consider implementing team building exercises (Scudamore, 2016). Scudamore (2016) cautions against typical team building activities, encouraging leaders instead to opt for authentic activities that teams can enjoy together. By addressing the need for interconnection amongst employees throughout the work day and beyond, “laughter, a sense of excitement and accomplishment” (Scudamore, 2016, para. 13) can emerge, letting leaders know they are headed in the right direction for organizational change. Therefore, while limitations exist, they are not insurmountable; given a solid commitment by key players, it is hoped that limitations be addressed and mitigated.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Taylor et al. (2014), in their review of the plan-do-study-act methodology, highlight a key point central to this OIP. Presenting the finding that local contexts play a role in the success or failure of interventions, they argue that interventions must be adapted to local contexts through which the problem evolved. The choice of tools to measure and track change are very specific to my organizational context and help to address the various factors that may be impeding organizational change. These tools include Bolman and Deal’s (2013) Four Frames Model, Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, and the Equity Committee’s (2012) Professional Development Continuums.

Bolman and Deal’s (2013) Four Frames Model nicely aligns with my school board’s MYSP, specifically in relation to the Strategic Direction of “Supportive Environments and Well-Being” (OCDSB, 2015). For the purposes of this OIP, it is necessary that it align with the currently existing framework as this MYSP has already been approved by board administration

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

and several community stakeholders. Further, student and staff well-being has been discussed across departments, and as a Strategic Direction, it would be well supported within the OIP.

Change Readiness Tool

Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames Model will be used as the Change Readiness Tool with the intent to develop resources that will track change, gauge progress, and assess the success of plan implementation. The Four Frames Model (Bolman & Deal, 2013) can be used as a tool by school and school board leaders to understand how organizational change can help to develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. The key assumptions of Bolman and Deal's (2013) Structural Frame indicates the organizational structure requires adjusting to better meet the needs of students and employees. Employees are reporting concerns for their safety and reports of violent incidents, instigated by students against staff, appear to be rising.

The PoP, when examined through Bolman and Deal's (2013) Human Resources frame, reveals that employees are feeling a sense of disempowerment. Increased absenteeism has been noted, as well as increased reports of violent incidents against staff, which has caused staff to feel unsafe in their working environment (Joint Healthy & Safety Committee meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015). These employee concerns must be carefully considered, especially in relation to the change plan.

Taylor et al. (2014) relate the importance of documenting each stage of the change plan. Once an intervention is identified and the plan put into action, it is important to summarize what has been learned, and determine what needs to be adjusted for the next cycle of implementation, or what must be abandoned (Taylor et al., 2014). In relation to employee absenteeism, during this initial stage of the change plan, this would entail monitoring employee attendance and the

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

relation to violent incidents against staff. This information is not currently collected and collated by one specific person or department. However, creating a tracking method is a recommendation of this OIP. It will help to collect and compare data over the two-year implementation period.

With the understanding that developing an online tracking system will take time, it will be necessary for pilot schools, with support from board administration, to manually track data until an online system is operational. Additionally, behaviour and/or safety plans should be monitored by the principal and a member of the Special Education team to ensure that all employees who support the student have had the opportunity to provide input on development of these plans.

Bolman and Deal (2013) in their Political Frame, note that those in power have potential to influence change within the organization. This is an important consideration for school board administration. There are many coalitions that exist within OCDSB. Parents form one coalition in advocating for support for their child, while teachers advocate for classroom support.

Principals campaign for school support, while administration and special education combine to form a different coalition based upon equitable allocation of resources within a prescribed budget set by the Ministry of Education. Maintaining open and ongoing communication will be necessary to integrate these coalitions, communicating the final goals of the OIP. When the plan is clearly communicated, it is hoped that the coalitions will form together, providing a unified voice that may help to bring these concerns to a larger provincial audience. Currently, student support is based on a variety of factors, including safety and behavioural concerns as well as severity of medical needs. For support to be fair and equitable across the board, it would be useful to develop a resource that will guide school and school board leaders in allocating support. If this process is not followed, school board leaders may be perceived as favouring one school and/or student over another.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

An additional concern within the Political Frame was mentioned previously in Chapter One, as most employee positions are mandated by either the Ministry of Education (i.e. supervisory officers), or unions (Human Resources Administrator, personal communication, September 17, 2015). This is a key point in the OIP. Although OCDSB is not able to change Ministry-regulated positions, it has the potential to negotiate different collective agreements with employee unions. Negotiations could involve the restructuring of positions to enable Educational Assistants to apply for positions based on additional qualifications and/or specialized training. For example, if an Educational Assistant were to take additional Applied Behaviour Analysis training, this qualification could allow him/her to apply for positions specifically related to Autism and/or behaviour. Incentives such as differing rates of pay for additional expertise could potentially be negotiated with the union. The intent is not to reduce the value of collective agreements, but rather to create opportunities where employees can specifically train to work with certain groups of students.

While these negotiations are outside the scope of my influence within this OIP, I can work with school board staff to provide job-embedded training and/or professional development training as required. If training and/or professional development is required from the Special Education Department, this can be communicated when the school team meets to develop or update safety and/or behaviour plans. Employee unions, principals, and/or school board administration may also recommend further training from the Special Education Department following board- or administrative-level meetings. This will help build capacity within staff positions as they currently exist.

The third consideration within Bolman and Deal's (2013) Political Frame encourages school board leaders to reflect on the possibility of rallying to lobby the Ministry of Education

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

for additional support. Discussed in both Chapter One and Chapter Two, there has been a history of inequitable funding for students with special needs in school boards across the province.

When boards joined forces and voiced their concerns in the press and to the Ministry of Education, a model was developed to help adjust funding to be more equitable for each school board (Peel District School Board, n.d.; Alphonso, 2014; Douglas 2014). However, while this has helped to stabilize the High Needs Amount (Education Officer, personal communication, April 15, 2016), additional funding for special needs students has remained unchanged for over a decade.

The importance of this funding cannot be understated from a school board level. This additional funding covers approximately 75 percent of one Educational Assistant's salary and is only accessible for students with the highest level of safety and medical needs. Accessing this funding requires additional staff supports to be implemented, and must include additional Educational Assistant support as well as support from a Resource Teacher. These personnel are required to provide the intense supports for our highest-needs students, but although salary and benefits have increased over the past decade, the funding from the Ministry of Education has remained stagnant. Again outside of my scope of influence, it is possible that school board administration could reflect upon past success in lobbying the Ministry of Education, and connect with additional school boards to amalgamate their voices, bringing this issue to the attention of the Ministry of Education and the public to lobby for increased funding.

Bolman and Deal's (2013) next frame, the Symbolic Frame, can be used as a tool in conjunction with the Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012) and will be discussed in greater detail in the Equity Tool section. As the continuums are already created, this will provide school staff with a visual to gauge their progress.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model has limitations, beginning with its origins as a corporate model. Publicly-funded school boards do not have the capacity to offer the financial incentives that may be possible within organizations. In addition, school boards have limitations when it comes to the ability to affect political change. Collective agreements are negotiated at a provincial level; therefore, larger coalitions of school boards must be formed to have any effect. Irrespective of these limitations, this tool offers school board leaders a framework as it provides specific assumptions that organizational leaders can reference that may impede or propel the organization towards change. A second limitation is this tool has no templates readily available; the required resources will need to be developed. Tracking forms and methods will be board-specific, allowing for the change plan to be specifically adapted to needs within the organization.

Problem of Practice Tool

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs serves as the Problem of Practice Tool. A visual of this tool, Figure 1, is available on page 53. Viewed through the lens of transformational leadership, it can help guide school staff in identifying barriers that may be preventing students from feeling a sense of social belonging in their school community, "encouraging followers to seek new ways to approach problems and challenges" (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 953). The committee will develop a form to help guide school leaders in addressing student needs, beginning with basic physiological needs. OCDSB currently has no board-specific forms; that is the rationale for creating forms and/or checklists specific to the needs of students at OCDSB.

The importance of developing this form in a collaborative manner within the committee cannot be understated. Since local contexts vary, it will be important for committee members to carefully consider information to be included. Department-level staff, for example, behaviour,

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

mental health, speech and language, and/or Autism support personnel, can provide guidance regarding specific information to be included. The rationale for involvement of multiple personnel during this phase is that each person has a specific area of expertise and field-specific knowledge to identify potential support agencies and/or resources. This could include a checklist-style form that indicates the specific agency/agencies and/or resources to be accessed. This would simplify next steps required, leaving a space on the form to indicate when the referral to the specific agency/resource was completed. Currently, this information is in anecdotal in nature, recorded in meeting notes collected by various individuals at OCDSB. If this information were at the top in checklist form, it would likely streamline the process, enhancing efficiency in referrals, while providing a succinct overview of next steps at a glance.

As noted, this form would indicate resources specific to the local context, and include health care professionals, such as pediatricians. This is especially important for students with Autism as some students with this diagnosis have experienced problems with their gut at some point during their development (Marks, 2016). Dietary restrictions are also common (Marks, 2016), with some students having a very limited food repertoire (Bandini et al., 2010). Interrupted sleep is also a concern for some of these students (Marks, 2016).

Referencing Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, the committee would identify potential issues, such as medical issues, to be addressed in form development. This could include sleeping patterns, eating habits, and/or prescription or naturopathic medications. Again, the expertise of those within the committee would allow a comprehensive overview of factors to be included on the form. Other team members, such as principals and/or teachers, would provide guidance to ensure ease of use for school personnel.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

It is important to note that although many school teachers and administrators are overwhelmed with forms, processes for school meetings at OCDSB are not structured in any way. Thus, it has been my experience that some meetings occur with limited prior consideration of goals, and sometimes, no clear direction. Use of a form, developed with representation across levels, would help to provide a clear sense of direction and next steps for these meetings that are already occurring.

Once this form has been completed, it may be incorporated into a student's IPRC meeting. Discussed in Chapter One, an IPRC occurs to formally identify a student within the school board. Many of these meetings typically occur to identify an initial diagnosis. This IPRC meeting would provide an opportune time for school and/or school board leaders to ensure that a family is connected to the appropriate community agencies and resources. Current practice at OCDSB is that an IPRC is often followed by a team meeting, so this would not likely be viewed as another add-on for school staff.

Aside from student needs, school board administration can reference Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs to identify additional areas of concern for employees, especially in relation to attendance issues. School board administration can ensure that an employee's physiological needs are being met when attendance concerns arise, before moving on to discussions about safety concerns.

Two limitations exist for this tool. First, it will be very difficult to engage non-verbal students. Some students who experience pain and have little or no expressive communication skills often lash out with aggressive behaviour as this is their only means of communication (Child Developmental Psychologist, personal communication, October 12, 2011). Second, Maslow (1943) identifies that some individuals may not follow the needs hierarchy as it exists.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

These individuals are children who have “been starved for love in the earliest months of their lives and have simply lost forever the desire and the ability to give and to receive affection” (p. 386). It will therefore be important to know a student’s early history, especially as it pertains to neglect and/or abuse. There are some children with Developmental Disabilities who attend OCDSB who are in care of Children’s Aid Society (CAS) for a variety of reasons. If students are in care of CAS, or if abuse or neglect is suspected, it may require additional agency referrals for expert-based services such as counselling. It is hoped that development of such a tool will help to encourage and/or maintain connection to agencies that are supporting our students.

Equity Audit Tool

The Equity Audit Tool is a set of Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012) designed for use by school staff including support staff, teachers, Early Childhood Educators, and principals. Please note that Professional Development Continuums and the Equity Committee are pseudonyms used to protect the identification of OCDSB. This tool can be easily integrated into school staff meetings, and encourages principals to guide discussions on a range of issues from self-advocacy to the sense of belonging. This will further reinforce distributed leadership practices as the principal and teachers (Harris, 2014; Harris 2005a) will be responsible for gauging their progress along each continuum. A 4-point scale, ranging from beginning implementation to ongoing learning for teachers and students, is assigned to each indicator that poses a series of questions for school staff to consider across environments. It begins with a consideration of the whole school community and expands to include suggestions for classroom and student reflection. The goal of these continuums is to increase acceptance and understanding of students with disabilities while increasing their ability to self-advocate and become active and included members of their school community. While

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

these continuums may be in use sporadically throughout the system, they are not fully in use.

The intent of this OIP is to ensure full implementation of these continuums.

Two limitations of the Equity Audit Tool should be identified. First, the Equity Audit Tool was not developed for use at the school board level. It will therefore be necessary for school board leaders to become familiar with this tool prior to presenting it to principals for school use. Second, I have a personal bias towards use of this tool as I was a member of the development team. However, although I participated in tool development, I can support the use of this tool without bias, as it was designed to increase accessibility for students across environments.

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

School board employees, whether they be superintendents, principals, or teachers, have ethical duties that involve responsibility for a child as well as his/her learning (Norberg & Johansson, 2007). This responsibility includes social, emotional, and physical well-being (Ontario College of Teachers, n.d.). The concept of ethics is varied, with no one definition uniformly agreed upon. However, one commonality among the definitions is that ethics is based upon our relationships with one another as well as our responsibility for one another (Norberg & Johansson; Liu, 2015; Couros, 2014; Baird, 2015; Ehrich, Klenowski, Smeed, & Spina, 2015; Ontario College of Teachers, n.d.).

Liu (2015) acknowledges that when leaders are perceived as ethical, they can positively influence the thoughts and behaviours of employees, specifically because “ethical leaders are thought to model their behaviours to followers” (p. 4). Further, Ehrich et al. (2015) note that ethics is a relational practice, based on relationships with others. As leadership is a human-centered relational activity, ethical leaders are viewed as caring and honest people who value inclusion, collaboration, and social justice (Ehrich et al., 2015).

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Ethical leaders also respond to the evolving needs of employees (Liu, 2015). Westersund (2017) agrees, noting that organizations are dynamic and constantly changing. Couros (2014) relating change to the educational system, states, “the only constant in education is change, people involved with education need to become “change agents” more now than ever” (para. 1). Understanding and explaining why change needs to occur is paramount to a change plan’s success; explaining why it is better for students is important because people want to do what is best for students (Couros, 2014). To do the best for students, school and school board leaders must address employee needs. Since employees are raising safety concerns, it is critical that change leaders clearly explain how developing a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour will support the needs identified by employees.

Couros (2014) feels that a key to successful change is to recognize and share good practices, and encourage others to tap in to these good practices so things will be even better. While data is important, it is the human connection that will ultimately draw people to the cause for change. It comes down to relationships.

This is especially true when leaders at OCDSB consider implementing change. This means, especially for the period in which pilot schools are being supported, that department-level staff carefully project and model transformational practices. For instance, when approaching a student who is in a time of crisis (without the threat of physical injury to student or staff), it will require modeling an approach based on caring and concern. Simply acknowledging how the student must be feeling, asking what he/she needs in order to feel better, and placing oneself on the level of the student so one is not looking down, are important considerations during the interaction (Marks & Marks, 2016). Additionally, body language and tone of voice must be

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

considered, along with recognizing the need to reduce verbal interactions with the student during this time (Marks & Marks, 2016). Once the student is calm, the opportunity will likely emerge in which a rapport can be developed with the student, beginning to set the foundation for relationship development. In projecting that the student is in a state of need instead of wilful aggression, leaders can display qualities that help to transform perceptions. Following the difficult behaviour, department-level staff can discuss the situation with classroom staff, offering the chance to discuss concerns and ask any questions. When the approach to challenging behavior comes from a place of understanding and compassion, the student will most likely respond in a positive manner, much as adults do when presented with genuine concern from another during times of great stress (Childhood Developmental Psychologist, personal communication, October 12, 2011).

When the approach to difficult behaviour starts with department-level staff modeling in the field working alongside the Educational Assistants who support these students daily, it offers teachers and school leaders the opportunity to observe and dialogue with department-level staff as behaviours arise. Further, this provides an additional opportunity for communication and relationship-development between all staff, as Educational Assistants have critical student-specific information that may benefit department-level staff when beginning to build new relationships with students. Therefore, this modelling and dialogue offers all school staff, including teachers and school leaders, the opportunity to observe and then practice strategies, trouble-shooting as needed with the support of department-level staff. Additionally, it will be important for department-level staff to realize they must be open to learning; they will need to work with school staff to determine the best approaches for a student in times of crisis. A final caveat is that department-level leaders must be careful to discuss any student behaviour only

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

when no students are present. Even when students lack expressive communication skills, their receptive skills may be higher and they may become agitated when their behaviour is openly discussed (Childhood Developmental Psychologist, personal communication, October 12, 2011). This provides a sense of dignity and respect for the child, regardless of his/her ability.

These key points are supported by Baird (2015), who addresses relationships through ethics, positing that the key to ethical behaviour stems from the desire to ask good questions that are framed according to four theories. Within the Rights/Responsibilities Lens, she encourages the individual to consider the rationale behind his/her choice and to act honestly and responsibly always. Further, she urges others to seek what is good by questioning, “How can I treat others as they want to be treated” (10:53)? As noted above, this is critical for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. However, it is also important to consider this question from a staff perspective, specifically as school and school board leaders are working with union representatives to address employees’ concerns regarding their daily work activities.

At OCDSB, violent incidents are currently being reported, but there is no standardized tracking system in place. If a tracking method were to be initiated that identified the staff member making the report as well as the student involved in the incident, it would allow for a specific protocol to be developed. This could also link to the monitoring of employee absenteeism that is related to student violence, and could help provide additional guidance regarding the development of the long-range professional development plan. One of the ethical concerns that arises here relates to identification of the student as he/she may then begin to be viewed in a negative manner, and potentially recognized by his/her disability. However, it is important to recognize that in many of these incidents, specialized school board staff are already

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

involved with these students, but may not realize the number of violent incidents that have been documented for privacy reasons. Being unaware of the number and/or severity of incidents then has repercussions. First, it does not always allow specialized support staff to implement interventions in a timely manner. If this information were tracked and communicated, it may allow for additional interventions to be implemented before the situation further escalates, as well as proactively address issues for future situations.

The second ethical concern is the identification of staff in the incident. If staff are identified and then called into meetings regarding the incident and/or any changes in their attendance, this measure may seem punitive. Therefore, identification of both individuals must be clearly communicated to be information-gathering only and supportive in nature. In addition, communication with the union is imperative prior to implementation, to ensure they are aware of, and can suggest, any supports that may be required for employees following a violent incident. Therefore, if an employee takes a medical leave after one or more incidents, citing the incident as the reason for absence, this information can be openly discussed with the union and specialized support staff. The review of behaviour and/or safety plans would be done collectively and may also include union representatives and additional community agencies to further support development of this collaborative document.

Norberg and Johansson (2007) note the importance of dialoguing with others about the situations in advance of making decisions. Critical to this OIP is ongoing communication between school board staff, employees, and union staff, especially when considering the development and/or implementation of any tracking system. Establishing a procedure for tracking repeated absences and examining the relationship to student violence will be critical to providing correct support for employees. These steps would recognize the responsibility of the

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

employer to keep the employee's safety foremost in the discussion, but equally respect the dignity of the student and their right to an education while considering any additional supports that may be required.

Second, Baird (2015) encourages reflecting upon “How can I treat others with respect”? (10:59). Baird asserts that when we treat others with respect, it provides them with the opportunity to choose a path in their life that has purpose and meaning. Again, this is important for both employees and students. Treating people equitably is a core component of being just (Ehrich et al., 2015). Treating employees with respect means not only acknowledging and addressing their concerns, but also empowering them to seek potential solutions, involving them in the dialogue of change (Liu, 2015). Using a transformational leadership approach can help to encourage dialogue as this OIP seeks to shift the focus of the conversation from wilful student aggression to consideration of factors that may be impacting student behaviour, such as physiological needs. This reflection can encourage employees to be mindful in their responses towards the student (Marks, 2016), aware of the fact that most students are reacting impulsively in situations where they lack the ability to self-regulate and/or communicate (Marks & Marks, 2016). Encouraging this change in mindset can occur during professional development and team meetings in which factors affecting student behaviour are discussed, but also modelled by department-level staff working in schools.

It is also critical to consider respectful behaviour as it pertains to students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. For example, it is necessary for school and school board leaders to consider incorporating education about inclusion within the classroom. Shields (2000), offering hope that schools can reach goals of true inclusion, asserts “developing a sense of school community based on respect for difference requires that each

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

individual and group within the school take seriously the need to examine who we are and how we choose to live together in the particular community known as school” (p. 291). This can be accomplished when school and/or school board leaders openly dialogue, with parental permission, about the needs of students with varying abilities. Nowicki and Brown (2013), in their study of student perceptions on including students with intellectual disabilities, discovered that students indicated “the need for teachers to become actively involved in facilitating inclusion” (p. 257). Further, they reported that other students identified the importance of discussing that all students are the same, and each individual is special. When school and school board leaders create an open, honest dialogue, they can help to develop relationships with peers, creating an understanding that while different, each of us is inherently the same. This creates a common understanding and respect for the student.

Baird’s (2015) third lens, the Relationship Lens offers the question, “How can I care for those with no power” (11:07)? This question relates most specifically to students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Providing the opportunity for choice whenever possible is a key component of this ethical behaviour (Baird, 2015). For example, most students have limited time for choice during the school day. For many students with Developmental Disabilities, choices are even more limited as their days typically follow a strict schedule. If educators are made aware of this, they can provide opportunities for choice when possible throughout the day.

Engaging school staff in this conversation, school and school board leaders can begin a dialogue. The Ontario College of Teachers (n.d.) identifies ethical standards for teachers, including “a commitment to students’ well-being and learning through positive influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice” (para. 3). The College also advises that

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

members honour human dignity and emotional wellness while modeling social justice. These are important recommendations to consider. The care of students, who may have limited control because of their age and/or disability, necessitates the creation of unique opportunities to weave choice throughout a student's day whenever possible, and may be as simple as offering a choice when it is time to take a break. Additionally, it is important for educators and school board employees to examine the lagging skills of the student and then determine how to teach the skills necessary for success (Greene, 2008; Greene, 2013; Adler, 1998).

This relates to Baird's (2015) fourth and final lens, the Reputation Lens, as she inquires, "For whom am I a role model" (11:14)? Couros (2014) supports this line of thinking and encourages educators to model the change they wish to see. Beatty (2015) provides a final caveat for both school and school board leaders, reflecting, "what change leaders do and say in the hallways is more powerful than any formal communications" (p. 13). This is key for transformational leaders; how they respond when helping a student in a moment of crisis sets an example for all staff when addressing challenging behaviours. When leaders are conscious of their responses, such as body language and tone of voice, and choose to mindfully respond in a calm and compassionate manner (Marks, 2016; Marks & Marks, 2016), they help to show, through their words and actions, how to support our most at-risk students. This OIP is designed with the intent to address the changing needs of our vulnerable students and the dedicated staff who support these students daily. When this is combined with school and school board leaders who emulate an ethical leadership style, it will lead to a more equitable and inclusive education (Ehrich et al., 2015).

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Change Process Communications Plan

Higgins and Rowland (2005) contend that change is a complex process and research indicates up to 70 percent of change initiatives fail. Beatty (2015) reports, “ineffective internal communication is a major contributor to the failure of change initiatives” (p. 1). Managing change is difficult and the process must be specifically adapted to the organization in which the change is to occur, with frequent opportunities to discuss the change process and make changes as required (Westersund, 2017). Bearing this in mind, Newman (2016) emphasizes “communication must be a part of every company’s plan for organizational change” (p. 1). Communication plans that are created to address organizational change can assist organizational leaders in following a clear change process (Newman, 2016).

The development of a communication plan allows the opportunity for multiple leaders to be involved in plan development and/or plan implementation (Newman, 2016). Newman (2016) further recommends the plan should clearly outline specific objectives as they relate to each audience, identifying who is responsible for communication and the timeframe in which the change plan will be unveiled. Beatty (2015) recognizes that stakeholders can be persuaded to adopt a new view, but cautions, “three things must be absolutely clear to them: the “why,” “what” and “how” of the change” (p. 1). Failure to develop and execute a well-thought out communication plan can create an unnecessary crisis within an organization (Newman, 2016). As the “why” (Beatty, 2015, p. 1) of the organizational change has been identified throughout this OIP, the change plan addressing plan implementation follows below in Table 3. Addressing change plan implementation across levels of OCDSB, it is reflective of a distributed leadership approach (Harris et al., 2007; Harris, 2005a; Harris, 2014). Transformational leadership (Bass &

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Steidlmeier, 1999; Avolio et al., 2004) is also indicated as the PoP also seeks to change perceptions of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Table 3

Organizational Change Plan: Implementing Change for Students with Developmental Disabilities Who Exhibit Challenging Behaviour

Audience	Change Objectives	Task Responsibility/ Who will Communicate?	Timeline for Communication and/or Implementation	Celebration of Milestones (How?)
School Board Employees	Develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour Reduce staff absenteeism	School Board Administration	At outset of initiating the OIP Ongoing throughout plan; revisit at Professional Development Days when all board staff is in attendance	Internal emails Personal recognition at school and/or board-based meetings Local media
Union Representatives	Develop a method of monitoring employee attendance as it relates to student violence To determine if job-specific qualifications can be implemented	School Board Administration School Board Administration	At outset of initiating the OIP Ongoing through OIP implementation	Personal communication with individuals Internal emails
Principals	Implement Professional Development Continuums in staff meetings	School Board Administration, Union Representatives, School Board staff (i.e. Special Education Department)	At outset of initiating the OIP Revisit continuums in divisional groupings every three months	Celebrate upward growth by division in each school Internal emails Personal recognition at school and/or

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

				board-based meetings
	Develop a uniform method of allocating support	Administration, Special Education Representatives, Principals	Allocation method to be developed within first 6 months	Small meetings with Administration, Special Education Representatives, Principals
	Monitor employee involvement in behaviour and/or safety plans	Principals, Special Education Staff, Educational Assistants	At outset of OIP	Communication with employee unions
Teaching/ECE Staff	Use of templates to guide meetings	School Board Administration, Special Education Department	Draft of templates to be developed within first 3 months	Share successes at staff meetings; review what could be changed/added to forms
Educational Assistants	Involved in development of behaviour and/or safety plans	Special Education Department Staff, Principals, School Board	At outset of initiating the OIP	Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings to review employee input
	Create a long-range professional development plan	Administration, Educational Assistants and/or union	Draft plan ready for review (after input) within 6 months	Internal emails
Parents/Community	Continued collaboration with parents and agencies	School Board Administration, Special Education Department, Principals and School Teams	At outset of initiating the OIP	Sharing informal feedback from parents and agencies regarding collaborative processes with schools and staff as opportunities arise
			Ongoing throughout plan	

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Next Steps and Future Considerations

Three steps are necessary to begin OIP implementation, displayed in Figure 2. First, the plan must be brought forward to school board administration for review and approval or adjustment. Once any recommended changes are made, this step should be followed with a meeting between school board administration and representatives of employee unions. This second step will allow for a collaborative review process in which all parties can provide input and/or voice any concerns. Once these key stakeholders have approved the change initiative, they can work together to approve or amend the communication plan as it exists within this document. It is important for school board administration and union representatives to work collaboratively throughout this plan to present a unified presence throughout the change process.

Third, communication of the plan to school board employees must begin, identifying when opportunity for input will be available, and implementation of the OIP must begin without delay. Interested staff will be asked to volunteer for the committee in each of the departments previously listed. Time commitments would be clearly indicated to avoid potential change in staff members throughout the change initiative. In the event that no individuals volunteer for the committee, it would be recommended that superintendents and/or Special Education Department staff visit schools with the highest number of violent incident reports to discuss the potential benefits of participating in the change plan.

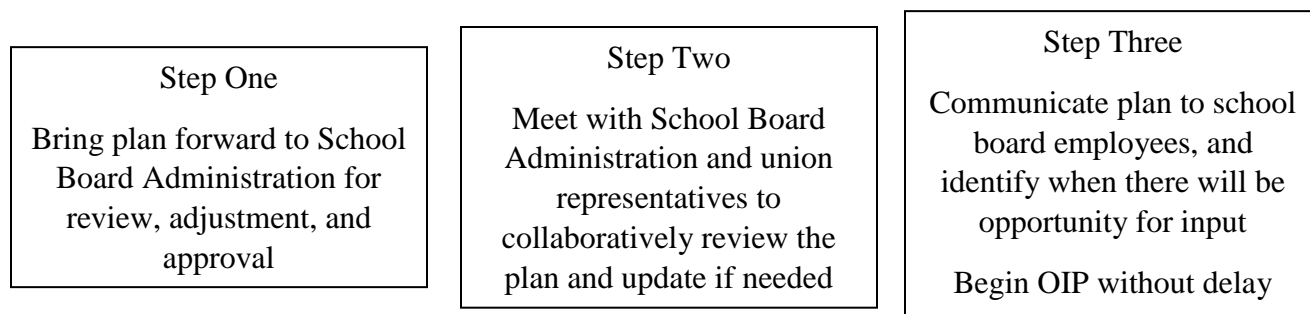


Figure 2. Change Plan Process.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Communication is key to this plan, and Beatty (2015) identifies that communication is not simply a tool, it can lead to change. Couros (2014) agrees, and reflects that often, through storytelling, people become vested in change. This is an important consideration, especially when reflecting on next steps for this OIP. The stories of students at OCDSB are varied and diverse, and these students who exhibit challenging behaviour bring their stories to school with them each day. Couros (2014) acknowledges that “to inspire meaningful change, you must make a connection to the heart before you make a connection to the mind” (para. 7). Most children seek love and belonging (Crouch, Keys, & McMahon, 2014; Pitonyak, 2004; Swinton, 2012; Hyashi & Frost, 2006; Prince & Hadwin, 2013; Maslow, 1943) they simply do not always display this desire in the most appropriate ways (Childhood Developmental Psychologist, personal communication, October 12, 2011). Knowing the stories of these students, students who cannot communicate, students who have been abused, students who have faced social isolation because of their disability, is important. Equally important are the stories of students who experience great family support, who achieve goals after months or years of therapy sessions, who participate and are integrated in community activities with typically developing peers as well as peers within their own community. These are the intricate and unique stories, created from their daily experiences as they experience life with a Developmental Disability.

However, it is not simply a story of life with a disability; it is a story in which successes, regardless of size, are acknowledged and celebrated. Understanding how these challenges and successes weave together to tell their story is important, for it helps all staff to understand the child as a whole person, not a person who is defined by his/her behaviour. Thus, it is important for all staff to hear some of the stories of our students, especially those with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. This will be an important consideration as I

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

reflect on next steps, as perhaps in sharing some of the challenges that students face before they walk through the school doors in the morning, we will begin to see a deeper staff commitment to the organizational change. Staff may then feel more empowered to critically analyze why challenging behaviour is presenting itself. These stories could be shared during professional development activities (with any identifying information removed), or stories could be collated from a variety of students to provide a snapshot of student experiences, similar to the Cameos provided in Chapter Two. “Stories touch the heart” (Couros, 2014, para. 7), and if school board employees become more emotionally invested, it is hoped a greater chance for change success will emerge.

Conclusion

To address lagging skills, it will be necessary to call on supportive relationships that have been forged between school board administration and union representatives. To maintain and expand upon these relationships, ongoing communication must be open and reflective. It is through these relationships that information can be gathered regarding the change process throughout the term of plan implementation, using distributed leadership approaches for change tasks and implementation of proposed changes. As described in Chapter One, OCDSB is ready for change as both union representatives and school board administration have been struggling with meeting the needs of students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour. Monitoring staff attendance and tracking violent incidents, as well as their relationship to one another, will help to indicate where additional supports are required. Staff participation in behaviour and/or safety plans will be monitored, another key element of distributed leadership. The development of a long-range professional development plan will help to efficiently organize financial and human resources, while addressing employee needs as

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

represented through their respective unions. Forms will be created to help guide school meetings aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of student needs. Finally, transformational leadership will guide school and school board leaders in considering how students with Developmental Disabilities are represented throughout the school and curriculum, and how they are integrated with same-aged peers, helping to determine any areas that may be impeding the development of a sense of social belonging. It is hoped, through the lenses of transformational and distributed leadership, that this OIP will help to meet the collective needs of staff and students as we seek to support students with challenging behaviour while maintaining the safety of all.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Summary and Conclusions

School and school board leaders at OCDSB are struggling to address the challenging behaviour of students with Developmental Disabilities. Employees and their union representatives have been bringing forward concerns about unsafe working conditions and are reporting that they feel disempowered (Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting, personal communication, October 1, 2015). These feelings of disempowerment stem from a lack of involvement in the development of student safety and/or behaviour plans, even though these employees work with these high needs students every day. Until recently, if employees, specifically support staff, were to attend meetings outside of school hours, it was of their own volition, with no remuneration. Practices have recently changed at OCDSB as these employees are now provided with either lieu time or paid time for their attendance at staff meetings. It is now the expectation, not the exception, that all employees who work with a student who has a behaviour and/or safety plan be involved in plan development and revision. These changes have shown a commitment from OCDSB to be respectful of employees' time and other obligations. This was a necessary first step to helping guide change within the organization.

Currently, OCDSB, along with many other schools across Canada (*De-escalating Aggression in Schools Taking Priority*, 2006; *NBTA Claims Teachers Donning Kevlar Clothing in Classrooms*, 2016), is at a crossroads. How school board leaders choose to make decisions involving student aggression is being carefully monitored by employees and their unions. Due to these mitigating factors, time is of the essence for organizational change to begin. Although student aggression is the reason for beginning to address much needed change, it is important that the focus turn from student aggression to developing employee skills and knowledge (Greene, 2008; Greene, 2013).

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Initiating organizational change will require a change from perceiving student behaviour as wilful misconduct to behaviour that stems from lagging skills and/or unmet needs. Therefore, to understand how school and school board leaders can help to develop a sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour, it will be necessary that they review potential factors inhibiting organizational change. For this OIP, school and school board leaders can reference Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames Model and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, and conduct a PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) that identifies political, economic, sociological, technological, and environmental factors that may be impacting the PoP.

Once these factors have been identified, in collaboration with employees and their unions, it will be necessary to develop tools to guide school and school board leaders in achieving this change. Bolman and Deal (2013) and Maslow can be used as frameworks to guide development of forms and/or checklists. Professional Development Continuums (Equity Committee, 2012) have already been completed and are ready for school use as the Equity Audit Tool.

Successfully adapting these theoretical frameworks (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Maslow, 1943) and implementing the tools requires leadership that is both transformational and distributed. Both leadership styles are built upon relationship development, and while transformational leadership can provide the impetus to spur change in employee perceptions, distributed leadership will be required for OIP implementation, as leadership, both formal and informal (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Harris, 2014), will be required from employees at OCDSB.

As noted, this organizational change is time-sensitive. If this OIP is implemented immediately, the change process can begin, with initial review of two pilot schools within the first school year. This first year will allow for form and/or checklist revision, and updating of

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

any policies and/or procedures. The second year will build upon the successes of the pilot phase, with full implementation expected within the second school year.

It is hoped that school and school board leaders will embrace the suggested changes outlined in this OIP. Many of these students are among the most vulnerable within the school system. With full implementation of this OIP and continued collaboration between school board employees, unions, parents, and community agencies, school and school board leaders can indeed positively affect the sense of social belonging for students with Developmental Disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviour.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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Appendices

Appendix A

The personal communications referenced throughout the OIP are summarized below. All identifying information has been removed.

October 12, 2011 – personal conversation with a Childhood Developmental Psychologist that initiated my interest in developing a sense of belonging for students with special needs; a personal turning point in my career

February 24, 2014 – personal communication with Special Education Staff Member #2 regarding training, such as crisis prevention, for school board staff outside of regular school hours

February 11, 2015 – presentation by a local Non-Profit Agency Representative that identified areas of low socio-economic status and the risk factors for students within Ontario Catholic District School Board

May 29, 2015 – personal conversation with Superintendent regarding the fiscal challenges faced by Ontario Catholic District School Board and the necessity to balance the school board budget to align with the Ontario Ministry of Education mandate

September 17, 2015 – personal conversation with Human Resources Administrator that outlined responsibilities of staff members, specifically the difference in assigned duties for Early Childhood Educators and Educational Assistants

October 1, 2015 – Joint Health and Safety Committee meeting that included representatives from school board administration, special education department, employee unions (CUPE and OECTA), and general school representatives of the Joint Health and Safety Committee

April 12, 2016 – personal conversation with Superintendent regarding the recent changes to High Needs Amount Funding for Ontario School Boards

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

April 15, 2016 – personal conversation with Education Officer from Ontario Ministry of

Education regarding the recent changes to the High Needs Amount Funding for Ontario
School Boards

April 22, 2016 – presentation by an external professional consultant that discussed common
reasons for maladaptive behaviours and the significance of appropriate adult response

June 13, 2016 – personal conversation with Human Resources administrator and superintendents
regarding the placement of Educational Assistants and noon-hour aides

June 21, 2016 – personal conversation with Special Education Staff Member #1 that discussed
how to allocate Educational Assistant support to students with special needs

November 14, 2016 – personal conversation with Special Education Staff Member #1 that
discussed formal identification of students attending Ontario Catholic District School
Board

March 22, 2017 – personal conversation with Human Resources administrator regarding training
for violent incidents for both full-time and occasional teaching and non-teaching staff

April 18, 2017 – personal conversation with Superintendent, regarding employee absenteeism
and sick leave benefits

April 26, 2017 – personal conversation discussing student safety and behaviour plans and
reporting of violent incidents with a Resource Teacher at OCDSB